

PhD - 1976 - A MILLARD - VOL. 2.



### SECTION III - RANK, STATUS, OFFICE AND EMPLOYMENT

Careful scrutiny of the titles and occupations of women, as recorded in the tombs of the nomarchs and provincial governors of the Middle Kingdom, gives some indication of the hierarchical structure of society in general, and of the great households in particular. The picture thus formed may be supplemented to a certain extent by such information as is available on stelae, on statues, on coffins, and in documents of the period. Even so, some sections of the community are inevitably less well represented than others, either because few detailed records concerning their wives were made, or have survived, or because comprehensive publication of some key sites has not yet been undertaken.

Tomb reliefs show numerous women engaged in a wide variety of tasks, but specific references to their rank and profession are often omitted. In order to avoid repetition, it is preferable to discuss the pictorial and the written evidence together, and the available material therefore has been arranged in nine groups, which reflect the occupations and the social standing of the women, as revealed by their titles, if known, and the duties they are shown performing.

The royal family has been deliberately excluded from the discussion because they form a separate caste, with a hierarchy and titles of their own, which deserve an independent analysis.

The groups which will be examined are:

(1) The aristocracy, by which is meant the wives of the provincial noblemen and the high-ranking courtiers, who between the held all the most senior offices in the administration of central and provincial government, in the armed services, and in the temple hierarchy.

Many of the rock-cut tombs of the nomarchs and the provincial governors have survived and have been published, but the mastaba tombs of the courtiers, which surrounded the royal pyramids, either have not survived, or were not as lavishly decorated, because of the different structure, or have not been published. Inevitably, therefore, more is known about the provincial aristocracy than the courtiers, and the following observations mainly concern them. Many of the titles and duties of the wives of courtiers may be identical with those of the wives of the nomarchs, but this is not invariably so, and more evidence must be awaited before many assertions concerning them can be made with any degree of confidence.

(2) The upper middle and middle classes. This group includes the wives of scribes and lower ranking army officers, administrators, and priests. Since these people did not possess large, finely decorated tombs, evidence concerning them is provided by their funeral equipment and by passing references in documents.

(3) Concubines. The position of these women in the social hierarchy was presumably determined to a great extent by the rank and fortune of their masters. Information concerning this class is meagre because it was customary for a wife to receive all the honours in the tomb of her husband.

(4) The wives of artisans, soldiers, sailors, huntsmen etc. These women are poorly represented in the material available for study. Such of their stelae as have survived are often of poor quality, with the minimum of inscriptions. If the husbands served a nomarch, they might be named in his tomb, but the names of their wives were not included,

though they may actually be found amongst the numerous, but largely anonymous household servants who are shown bearing offerings to the owner of the tomb.

(5) The higher household servants. A few women held positions of authority and trust in the large households, and this presumably meant that they were the social equals, if not superiors, of the women in Group 4.

(6) The lower household servants. This group includes those women who, though they had little authority, performed tasks that brought them into close contact with members of the family who employed them.

(7) The menial servants. These are the women who did hard, physical work of a domestic nature.

(8) Field workers and peasants. The social standing of women married to peasants would presumably vary according to whether or not they were independent farmers cultivating their own land. The family of a man who owned his own land would logically have a higher social status than the family of a landless worker, toiling in a nobleman's kitchen, though in terms of physical labour, the peasant might actually work harder. However, a peasant bound to work on another man's land might not enjoy the security or prestige of a member of a nomarch's household.


(9) Children. Their status would reflect that of their parents, but there are a few general observations that can be made about their lot.


#### GROUPS 1 and 2

Groups 1 and 2 will be considered together, because several of the titles to be discussed were common to both.



A) Non-religious titles and epithets.

- 1)  , nbt pr, Lady of the House.

This is the most common of all the titles held by women during the Middle Kingdom, and it occurs regularly on the stelae of the period, often without any accompanying kin-term. In order to be able to reconstruct family trees from stelae, it is therefore necessary to determine whether nbt pr was simply being used as a synonym for  , hmt, wife, or whether there was some subtle difference in status between the two.

On a stela, when a man wished to record the fact that he had been married more than once, it was the custom to use the same term, i.e. hmt.f or hmt.f nbt pr, of each wife. No cases can be quoted of stelae where two wives are both said to be nbt pr only, and no examples can be identified of a stela on which a man claims one woman as his wife, hmt.f, but admits to having children by a woman entitled nbt pr \*(1).

The tomb of Wh-htp the sixth of Meir shows that this man had about a dozen women in his harim (see below, Section IV, p. 394, on the question of polygamy), of whom at least five were said to be nbt pr, but only one was actually referred to as hmt.f. On the face of it, this would appear to be proof of a difference in status between a hmt and a nbt pr, but there is a group statue in Cairo \*(2) which deserves very special consideration in this context. The central figure in the group is Wh-htp the sixth himself, and standing in front of him is the diminutive figure of his only known child, s3t.f mryt.f n st ib.f Nbt-hwt-hnwt.sn, his daughter whom he loves, his darling Nbt-hwt-hnwt.sn. Standing on either side of Wh-htp are the figures of two women. One is named as hmt.f mryt.f n st ib.f nbt pr Hnmw-htp ast n Im3, his wife whom he loves, his darling, the lady of the house, Hnmw-htp

born of ʿIn3, and she undoubtedly corresponds with number 18 in the list of relatives of Wh-htp, quoted by Blackman \*(3). It is true that there is a slight discrepancy between the spelling of the name of the mother as given here and as it appears in the Blackman list (number 3), but in view of the similarity of all the other names, this must be the same women.

The woman standing on the other side of Wh-htp in this group of statuary is named as hmt.f mryt.f n st ʿib.f nbt pr Nb(w)-k3w mst n ʿIwnwt, his wife whom he loves, his darling, the lady of the house, Nb(w)-k3w born of ʿIwnwt. This woman and her mother correspond with numbers 10 and 2 respectively in the Blackman list.

In the tomb, neither Hnmw-htp nor Nb(w)-k3w is said to be hmt.f, yet they are both so called on this statue group. Unless it is suggested that the status of both women changed between the execution of the inscriptions in the tomb and the commissioning of the statues, it must be accepted that the terms hmt and nbt pr were interchangeable. Further confirmation of this is found on Louvre stelae C.16, C.17, and C.18 (see above p.25), where a woman is variously entitled hmt.f nbt pr, nbt pr and snt.f nbt pr, and the very existence of the combination of the two designations hmt and nbt pr in the phrase hmt.f nbt pr must surely preclude the possibility of any radical difference in status between a hmt and a nbt pr. The possibility that there was some difference, such as an economic one, between those families who employed the term nbt pr and those that did not will be considered later.

Though it may be accepted that nbt pr can be used in place of hmt, this does not mean that every woman on a given stela who is said to be a

nbt pr is automatically to be identified as the wife of the owner. It must be remembered that hmt.f is a kin-term, and it could only be used to express a woman's relationship to an already named man, whereas nbt pr is a title, which could be used by a woman in documents and on scarabs and seals \*(4) to identify herself as an individual, and not only as one half of a named pair in a legally constituted partnership - a marriage.

The overt meaning of nbt pr is that the bearer is the female head of a household, and, in normal circumstances, she would be the wife of the man of the house. In the event of the death of his wife, a man's mother, sister or daughter might undertake the management of his domestic affairs, but there are stelae \*(5) where all the female relations of the owner are entitled nbt pr, and it is hardly feasible to suggest that they all managed his household in turn. However, attention has already been drawn to the common practice of omitting the names of sons-in-law, brothers-in-law, and even fathers from stelae, so if all the women on a given stela are entitled nbt pr, this only means that they were all married to men of substance, and bore this title as the female heads of their respective establishments.

Obviously there need be no hesitation of identifying a nbt pr as the wife of the owner of a stela, if she is said to be the mother of his children. However, there are cases where kin-terms identify the owner's children but the words "born of", together with the name of the mother, are omitted. If, on such a stela, there is a nbt pr, who is shown with the owner in an area normally reserved for the wife, (see Excursus D, p.503 ), then there is little doubt that she is to be identified as the wife. The really difficult cases are those where either the owner is shown with one nbt pr and no other information is supplied or where, again without any reference to kinship or

mother's name, several men are grouped together with women all entitled nbt pr. It is impossible to decide the relationships between the individuals on such stelae, so they have been omitted from the family trees from the statistics on Chart 1, and from any of the analyses where exact degrees of kinship need to be recorded.

The 780 published stelae, dated to the Middle Kingdom, in Cairo \*(6) provide a good representative selection, so a count was made to ascertain the ratio in which the terms hmt.f nbt pr, and nbt pr were employed. The results were as follows:

228 stelae used hmt.f for the wife of the owner.

53 used hmt.f nbt pr.

107 used nbt pr.

Clearly there was a preference for the use of the term hmt.f, and this is most probably because, though it does not take up much space, often a consideration on stelae, it does convey the exact relationship between the woman and the owner of the stela. In the case of the daughters and sisters of the owner, however, the title nbt pr was a useful addition if space allowed, for it established their status without having to name their individual husbands, and the title nbt pr, applied to women other than the wives of the owners, appears on 178 of the Cairo stelae.

It would be very interesting if it could be established whether or not all married women were automatically entitled to call themselves nbt pr, or whether this was reserved for those women who, thanks to the affluent<sup>11</sup> circumstances of their husbands, had a household with servants to command. Unfortunately the paucity of evidence makes it impossible to

reach any firm conclusions on this point. Only a very small percentage of the stelae available for examination belong to the artisan class, so the information they afford may be unreliable, but the fact remains that, on existing stelae, the title of nbt pr is not awarded to any of the wives of men who belong to Group 4.

ii)  s3t h3ty-', daughter of a h3ty-' prince \*(7).

This title is only found among women of the first group, and obviously it can only have been used by women who were actually the daughters of h3ty-' princes. The title was not necessarily abandoned at marriage, though many women entitled to use it may not have done so after marriage, since it would be superseded by other titles that became theirs, either by virtue of their husbands' rank, or by inheritance.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, ps.35/36, tomb 2 in the shrine. The mother and wife of the owner.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXV. The wife of the owner of tomb 3.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXV. The daughters of the owner of tomb 3.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.VI. The sister of the owner of the tomb.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XIII. Two women, presumably the wives of

Wh-htp the sixth.


British Museum stela, vol.III, pl.7. Mother of the owner.


Verschiedenen Sammlungen, pl.I, no.1. Her relationship to the owner is unknown.

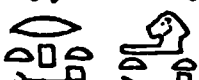
Louvre stela C.5, 1.VIII. Her relationship to the owner is unknown.

Louvre stela C.179, pl.XXXIV. The wife of the owner.

Ann. du Serv., 1923, vol. XXIII, p. 183. This woman married a King's Son (s3 nsw), and was the mother of a Controller of the Ruler's Table (w'rtw n tt hk3).

Enough examples of s3t h3ty-' have survived to show that it was a recognised title. Evidently closely related, though not in the same class, since they do not occur frequently enough to be considered as regular titles, are such designations as , s3t hry(w)-tp nw Šm'w, the Daughter of the Overlords of Upper Egypt \*(8), and

, s3t hk3, Daughter of a District Governor \*(9). Both indicate that the women referred to were daughters of the highest ranking provincial nobility, and they are therefore to be assigned to Group 1.

iii) , irytp't h3tyt-', Hereditary Heiress \*(10) and h3tyt-' princess.

The masculine versions of these two titles are usually found in association, so they will be considered together here, though in fact, there are only two known cases of women bearing both titles during the Middle Kingdom. These women belong to Group 1, but since the titles are so uncommon \*(11), few other positive conclusions can be drawn concerning their significance.

The existence of the title s3t h3ty-' must preclude the possibility that h3tyt-' was merely record of the rank of the woman's family, especially when it is remembered that there were women who bore both titles \*(12).

Similarly, irytp't is unlikely to be a simple reflection of family status because use, in the tomb of Hnm(w)-htp the second of Beni Hasan, where

the titles of all his children have survived, his four sons and three daughters by his wife, Hty, are all entitled s3(t) h3ty-, but none of them is said to be an iry(t) p't, though Hnm(w)-h3p himself was an iry p't h3ty-.

A possible explanation might be that a woman became an iry p't h3tyt- if she married an iry p't h3ty-, but the available evidence hardly bears this out. Several stelae in the Cairo collection, for example, were owned by men who bore one or both titles \*(13), and yet none of their wives was accorded either title. Similarly, Chart 3, which was compiled from those tombs of the provincial aristocracy where an effective number of titles have survived for both husband and wife, shows that, of the men, twenty-five have one or both titles, but there are only eight occurrences among the women. Even making allowance for accidents of survival, if the titles iry p't h3tyt- were merely acquired on marriage to an iry p't h3ty-, then the title ought to occur far more frequently on stelae and in tombs than it does. Moreover, if a woman acquired her titles at marriage, there would be no reason for a woman to have one title, while her husband bore another, yet as will be seen from the following examples, this does occur.

If neither birth nor marriage gave women the ranks of iry p't h3tyt-, then another explanation must be sought from what is known about the careers and family background of the women concerned.

Examples of iry p't \*(14):

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXV, lines 64/65. B3kt was the daughter of Hnm(w)-h3p the first of Beni Hasan and, on the death of her only brother, Nht the first, she inherited the district known as Menat Khufu, which subsequently passed to her son, Hnm(w)-h3p the second.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XLVI. S3t-<sup>2</sup>Ip was the wife of Hnm(w)h<sub>4</sub>tp the first, and the mother of Nht and B3kt, but nothing is known about her parents or their titles.

Beni Hasan, vol.II, pl.XXIV. Hty was the daughter and heiress of the ruler of the Jackal Nome, and the wife of Hnm(w)-h<sub>4</sub>tp the second. The Jackal Nome was eventually inherited by one of her sons.

el Bersheh, vol.II, p.23. Hthr-h<sub>4</sub>tp was the wife of the nomarch Dhwty-nht of el Bersheh, and she was the daughter of a woman called Dhwty-h<sub>4</sub>tp. Unfortunately nothing is known about the rank of Dhwty-h<sub>4</sub>tp or her husband.

el Kab, pls.VII and XI. Nfrw and Rd1.n.s were the mother and wife respectively of Sbk-nht, but nothing is known of their parentage.

Cairo stela 20537. The 1ryt p't Nfrw was married to a h3ty-' and their son was a h3ty-' 1my-r hmw ntr. Thus Nfrw neither shared her title with her husband, nor did she pass it on to her son. This son was married to the 1ryt p't s3t nsw Sbk-nht, about whom nothing else is known.

Ann. du Serv. 1917, vol.XVII, p.240. The 1ryt p't 3st was married to a h3ty-', but the stela supplies no details concerning the rank of either of her parents.

Ann. du Serv. 1922, vol.XXII, p.116. Only a fragment has survived of this late Middle Kingdom stela from Edfu so the name and titles of the owner are missing, but his wife appears to have been entitled s3t nsw 1ryt p't. They had at least two daughters - one of whom was the hmt nsw Sbk-m-s3.f, while the other was the 1ryt p't Nfr-n.

The available evidence is therefore too meagre to draw any



definite conclusions concerning the significance of the title iry p't but in the two cases where something is known about the family background of these women both can be shown to be considerable heiresses, bringing more into their husbands' families than a simple dowry. It is therefore possible that iry p't does denote an heiress.

Examples of h3tyt-' :

Antaeopolis, pl.X. Kmw.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXV, lines 64/65. B3kt.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XXXII and XXXV, also, vol.II, pl.XXIV.



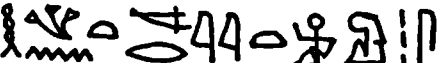
ty.

Nothing is known about the family background of Kmw, but it has already been established that B3kt and Hty inherited whole districts. Though the sons of B3kt and Hty eventually inherited their mothers' lands, neither Nhri the first nor Hnm(w)-h3tp the second claim any titles in connection with the districts inherited by their respective wives.

The title h3ty(t)-' implies one who is in the forefront of the people, either by birth, or wealth, or office, or a combination of all three. It is therefore possible that, along with their lands, these women inherited certain administrative duties as well \*(15).

The objection may be raised that too much significance is being attached here to titles which, in the masculine form, are not, after all, uncommon among the noblemen of the Middle Kingdom, but if iry(t) p't h3ty(t)-' were mere courtesy titles, why are they awarded to so few noblewomen? Certainly these titles would be of less immediate significance to a man than his titles of office, since to be an iry p't h3ty-, all he



would have to have done would be to survive to adulthood, acquire or inherit estates, and enter into the necessary administrative duties. In the case of noblewomen, however, though there was no prohibition on a man leaving property, even property of great value, to his female descendants (see below, Section IV, p.346), it would only be on the extinction of the male line in her family that a woman might inherit her father's province and any administrative functions appertaining there unto.

- iv)  hnwt hm(w)t nb(w)t, mistress of all women.  
 hnwt pr.s, mistress of her house.  
 hnwt mrt.s, mistress of her servants.

In tomb 14 at Beni Hasan, Sjt-tp, the wife of the owner, is said to be "mistress of all women", but it is not clear whether this was because she was an iryt p't, or because she was the wife of the hry-tp '3 n M3hd, Great Chief of the Oryx Nome.

Of the two women entitled iryt p't h3tyt-' at Beni Hasan B3kt is awarded no additional titles, but all information concerning her comes from the biography of her son, where she plays a role of secondary importance. In tomb 23, however, Hty is said to be both hnwt pr.s and hnwt mrt.s, besides being iryt p't h3tyt-' and s3t h3ty-' nbt pr.

These three appellations are only to be found, or have survived only, in the tombs at Beni Hasan. They are honorary epithets, rather than titles, but they evidently reflect the special status of these three women, who were not only married to provincial governors, but who were also heiresses in their own right.

v)  and  rh̄t nsw and rh̄t nsw m3't, King's Acquaintance and King's True Acquaintance.

In the Old Kingdom these two titles occur frequently and appear to have been born by those who were related to the King by blood or by marriage, though they were not necessarily of the immediate royal family. By the early Middle Kingdom, however, the numbers of rh̄(t) nsw were declining, and if there was any blood relationship to the royal family, it was a very remote one.

The title rh̄(t) nsw implies one who, at some time, enjoyed a close personal relationship with the monarch, and the existence of the two titles rh̄t nsw and rh̄t nsw m3't presumably reflected degrees of intimacy with the ruler. The men and women who were awarded these titles must have spent some period of their life in close attendance on the king, and some may even have been the companions of his childhood. This being the case, only members of Group 1 were rh̄(t) nsw.

Examples of rh̄t nsw m3't:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XVIII. H̄tp̄t.

Cairo stelae 20564. T3ny owned this stela, and the name and title of her husband, if she was married, are unknown.

Examples of rh̄t nsw:

Beni Hasan, vil.I, pl.XXXV. H̄ty.

Beni Hasan, vol.II, pl.XXIV. H̄ry-ib.

Cairo stela 20500. The wife of the owner.

Cairo stela 20504. The wife of the owner.

Cairo stela 20511. Probably the wife of the owner.

Berlin stela, vol.I, p.120, no.7779. Her relationship to the owner is unknown.

British Museum stela, vol.IV, pl.32. She owns the stela and no husband is named.

Lacau, Sarcophages, nos.28011, 28015 and 28017. No husbands are named on coffins.

Newberry, Liverpool Annals, 1912, vol.IV, ps.99/120, tombs 11, 22 and 24.

Nothing is known of the titles of the husbands, if any, of six of these women, but of the rest, four of them share their title with their respective husbands. It must be remembered, however, that there are many cases of a man being a rh nsw, though his wife is not a rh t nsw \*(16), so it is unlikely that a woman became a rh t nsw by marrying a rh nsw, and when a rh t nsw is known to have children \*(17) she does not seem to have passed on her title to them.

vi)  b3kt nt hk3, Servant of the Ruler.

The duties of the women who bore this title are unknown, but, judging by the titles of their husbands, they belonged mainly to Group 2, and, even if they performed quite menial tasks such as waiting at table, they would still be regarded with great respect as the services were being performed for the sovereign.

Examples:

Cairo stela 20086. She was the wife of an iry p't h3ty- who was also idnw imy-r sd3wtw, Deputy Overseer of the Treasurers.

Cairo stela 20481. She was the mother-in-law of the s3w smyt, the Guardian of the Necropolis. It is extremely rare indeed to find the

titles of a man's mother-in-law on his stela, so this man must have been proud of her rank to include it.

Cairo stela 20530. She was the mother-in-law of a hm ntr n Hr Bhdt, Prophet of Horus of Behdet.

Cairo stela 20673. She was the mother of a wr mdw Šm'w, a Magnate of the Tens of Upper Egypt.

Cairo stela 20742. Her relationship to the owner is not given.

Louvre stela C.190, pl.XLIX. She was the mother of the owner of the stela. The inscription is not completely legible, but her son may have been a wr mdw Šm'w.


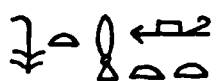
Copenhagen, pl.XIII, fig.17. She was the wife of a wr mdw Šm'w.

Florence stela 7603, photograph 43. She was the wife of a hry hbt, Lector Priest.

Bolton, 10.20.12. She was the mother of a rh nsw, King's Acquaintance, and the wife of a šmsw, Retainer.

Alliot, B.I.F.A.O., 1937, vol.XXXVII, ps.106/108, nos.17 and 20. This woman was the wife of the owner, who was a smsw hyt, an Elder of the Portal.

Petrie, Diospolis Parva, p.XXVII. A most interesting variation of this title appears on a pair of ivory wands, made in the shape of arms, which came from grave Y196 at Hu. They are said to belong to a woman called S3t-Hthr, who bore the title b3kt nt hk3t. This is the only case of the title being applied to a female "ruler".

vii)  and  \*(18), hkrt nsw and hkrt nsw w'tt, King's Favourite (19) and King's Sole Favourite.

During the Old Kingdom, the titles hkrt nsw and hkrt nsw w'tt were apparently held by most of the wives and daughters of the nomarchs, and there is one example of as3t nsw, King's Daughter, who was also a hkrt nsw w'tt \*(20). However, during the First Intermediate Period, the titles occur less frequently, and by the Twelfth Dynasty, they disappear completely from the tombs of the provincial governors. The single exception is to be found in the tomb of Sbk-nht at el Kab, where a hkrt nsw is named as the mother of one of the daughters of Sbk-nht \*(21) though she is not said to be his wife, nor is she awarded the title of nbt pr.

Although it is often stated that a hkrt nsw (w'tt) was, or had once been, a royal concubine \*(22), there is little conclusive evidence to substantiate this. There is a tomb at Gizah, dated to the Old Kingdom, which belongs to a woman, who, to judge from her titles, must surely have been a concubine, but unfortunately she appears to have had no children, so absolute proof, in the form of children entitled s3(t) nsw, King's Son (or Daughter), is lacking \*(23).

If hkrt nsw (w'tt) does mean a royal concubine, then apparently most of the daughters of the nomarchs of the Old Kingdom were, at some time in the royal harem, after which they left and were married to men of their own class. This is not impossible, for pre-marital sexual intercourse with a god-king might well be held to enhance a girl's reputation, rather than detract from it.

Conclusive evidence concerning the relationship between the king and a hkrt nsw (w'tt) during the Middle Kingdom is also lacking. The occurrences of the titles hkrt nsw and hkrt nsw w'tt are listed on Chart 4, together with the titles of the husbands, where known. It will be observed that the




women entitled hkrt nsw w'tt were apparently all married to important courtiers, and their husbands, almost without exception, bore the title smr w'ty, Sole Friend or Sole Companion. This must surely be more than a co-incidence, and the two titles may have been in some way complementary, both indicating courtiers, male and female, of a high rank.

Whereas the hkrt nsw w'tt were married to men belonging to Group 1, the hkrt nsw appear to have married men belonging to Group 2, clearly indicating that the word 'tt denoted a higher rank, so, although it is usually translated "sole", perhaps "of the first rank" would convey the meaning more accurately.

However, none of these deductions provide a solution to the problem of whether or not a hkrt nsw (w'tt) was expected to have sexual contact with the monarch during her career.

Cairo stela 20543 (see below p.509 ), certainly does name a hkrt nsw who was also a King's Wife, but she was also a King's Daughter, so her case is atypical. The five women and the child buried within the funerary temple of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep at Deir el Bahari, must clearly have been closely attached to the person of the monarch, or they would not have been awarded this extraordinary honour. There can be no doubt that the women had a sexual relationship with the king because one of them at least was also a hmt nsw, King's Wife \*(24), and some shattered fragments found by Naville suggest that two others probably also bore this title \*(25). It is, however, the titles hkrt nsw and hkrt nsw w'tt, which they appear to have been most proud of, repeating them many times on their sarcophagi and coffins, suggesting perhaps, that the hmt nsw title was either a very recent

acquisition at the time of their deaths, or even that it was a posthumously awarded honour.

The hieroglyph used throughout the inscriptions in the burials of these five women, and on Cairo stela 20543, for hkrt was actually  not , or the equivalent . It is therefore just possible that the titles of these, the real concubines, or minor wives of the King, should be read something like i 3t (var. i3mt) ns, which would closely resemble the known title of the queens, wrt i3t, Great in Charm, or Great in Graciousness. If this were so, then i 3t n w would be a real concubine or minor wife, while hkrt ns ('tt) would refer to a female member of the royal court.

These titles occur on stelae, as well as in tombs, and on coffins of the late First Intermediate Period, or the Middle Kingdom (see Chart 4), but, though they usually supply enough information to show that the majority of the women were married and had children by their husbands, no details are given regarding their relationship with the king.

Besides the occurrences of the titles hkrt nsw (w'tt), Chart 4 also records how many of these women were also prophetesses of Hathor. Of the 38 women entitled hkrt nsw w'tt, 24 were also hmt ntr Hthr, while only 2 of the hkrt nsw held the priestly title as well. It might be considered of special significance that such a high percentage of possible royal favourites were in the service of the goddess of joy, were it not for the fact that the women entitled hkrt nsw w'tt were members of Group 1, whereas the hkrt nsw belonged to Group 2, so the former, having the higher social standing, were also in a better position to obtain religious benefices.



The evidence at present available is therefore inconclusive with regard to the exact nature of the duties of a hkrt nsw (w'tt). If it is accepted that there was also a title imjt nsw (w'tt), then there is no problem, for they would be the inmates of the royal harem, while the hkrt nsw (w'tt) would be courtiers. If, however, all writings are to be read as hkrt nsw (w'tt), then the evidence is open to two interpretations. It may be argued that hkrt nsw (w'tt) were titles of true concubines, and it therefore follows that girls from the highest families in the land entered the royal harem for a time and left to be married \*(26). Alternatively it may be suggested that hkrt nsw (w'tt) were titles of courtiers, some of whom also happened to enter the royal harem.

Whichever explanation is preferred, the presence of the hkrt nsw (w'tt) and the smr w'ty does suggest that these men and women may have entered the royal household at an early age, possibly as companions for the princes and princesses \*(27), and that when they grew up, they formed the nucleus around which the next king would build his court and his administration. The girls, on reaching puberty, might marry within their own class and become courtiers, or they might become minor wives or concubines of the king. Whichever the girls chose, they might retain the rank of hkrt nsw (w'tt), if it had been theirs from an early age. This might explain the presence of the child T3-Mi<sup>?</sup>yt, who was buried with the five young women at Deir el Bahari (see below p. 341 ). She was not the daughter of the king, but she might have been a member of his household, and a future member of his, or his eldest son's harem. Although Naville does not publish any of the fragments from her shrine, he does

include her name with the other five women and says that they were all royal favourites \*(28).

viii)  , špst nsw, King's Lady.

This was a popular Old Kingdom title, and was usually held by the wives and daughters of the nomarchs, together with hkrt nsw w'tt. It had fallen into disuse by the Twelfth Dynasty, and the examples quoted below are all from the late First Intermediate Period or the Eleventh Dynasty. It presumably indicated that the bearer was a woman of high rank, and probably a favourite at court.

Examples:

Lacau, Sarcophages, nos.28011, 28015, and 28017.

Newberry, Liverpool Annals, 1912, vol.IV, p.103.

#### B) Religious titles.

In order to avoid repetition, all religious titles are included here, though some of the lower ranking appointments may actually have been held by women belonging to groups other than 1 and 2.

So few Middle Kingdom temple reliefs have survived that information concerning the duties of priestesses of all ranks is very limited, but, as in the New Kingdom, their main function was probably to provide the choral and musical aspects of the divine service, without which, no act of worship was complete. However, it was doubtless also the privilege of a few high-ranking priestesses to represent, or even impersonate, certain goddesses in some religious rituals and processions \*(29), in the various mystery plays performed annually at the great cult centres \*(30), and at funerals (see below, p. 287 ,v).

i)  , hmt, the wife of a named diety.

The position of the earthly wife of a god is manifestly an exalted one, and its holder must have been the head of the female hierarchy of the temple concerned, but the exact nature of her duties is impossible to determine. There are only two available examples from the Middle Kingdom of women who claim to be the wife of a god, the deities in question being Min and Amun.

The present lack of evidence makes it difficult to determine whether these women had a purely spiritual union with their divine spouse, or whether they had some sexual contact, either with the King or the High Priest, perhaps in the guise of the god, though in view of the ithyphallic character of the god Min, and the close affinities between him and Amun, there is a distinct possibility that these wives may have had some duties of a sexual nature to perform.

Examples:



hmt Mnw, the Wife of Min. Newberry, *Ildverpool Annals*, 1912, vol.IV, p.103. The woman in question also bears the titles hkrt nsw w'tt and špst nsw, and she was probably unmarried as she is the sole owner of the tomb.



hmt ntr, the Wife of the God. This title occurs on the base of a wooden statuette, now in Leiden (Inv. no.A.H.113)\*(31), where it is part of a simple hṯp dī nsw formula:



Imḥyt hr Imn hmt ntr drt (ntr) ṯy-mrt-nb.s m3't-hrw mst n Dwī m3't-hrw.

The one revered before Amun, the God's Wife and (God's) Hand ṯy-mrt-nb.s the justified, born of Dwī the justified.

There can be little doubt that the divine husband in question is

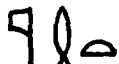
Amun, because he is the only deity named. Hitherto, the title of God's Wife of Amun has always been assumed to date from the early New Kingdom \*(32) when it was awarded to the King's Great Wife (hmt nsw wrt), who was expected to give birth to the next king, after intercourse with Amun himself, disguised as the reigning pharaoh. The title was later transferred to various princesses, but they appear to have led a chaste life, devoted to the spiritual service of their divine bridegroom. Neither Iy-mrt-nb.s, nor her mother Dwt, make any claim to have any affiliations with the royal family.

The statuette is thirty-four inches in height, and shows Iy-mrt-nb.s with her hands rather stiffly at her sides \*(33), and her left foot forward. She is wearing a simple tunic and sandals, and her long hair or wig, is plaited and curled \*(34). The cheeks are smooth and full, and the eyes are inlaid \*(35).

All the names beginning with the syllables Iy-mrt listed by Ranke \*(36) belong to the Old and Middle Kingdoms, and it is difficult to see how the statuette can be dated to the New Kingdom or after, because by then the title of hmt ntr always went to a member of the royal family.

If the reading of God's Wife (of Amun) is accepted, then there is no reason to doubt that the second title is grt ntr, God's Hand, though previously the first example of this title was dated to the reign of Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III \*(37).

It is most regrettable that nothing else is known about this woman and her mother. It would have been interesting to know if Iy-mrt-nb.s was married, and what religious offices, if any, were held by Dwt.

ii) , hmt ntr, prophetess, priestess.

The title hmt ntr occurs frequently in the Old Kingdom, when the most popular priesthoods for women appear to have been those of Hathor, Neith, and some of the divine monarchs. Regrettably there are no scenes showing a hmt ntr performing the leading role in an offering ritual, so, although their titles imply that these women were the feminine counterparts of the hm ntr, there is no proof as to whether they could conduct an act of worship, or whether their duties were confined to the liturgical support of their male colleagues \*(38).

The Middle Kingdom evidence shows that the title hmt ntr was borne by women of Groups 1 and 2, and that the majority of these were in the service of the goddess Hathor.

Examples of hmt ntr thr:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXII.

el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.XX.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.VI.

Mo'alla, p.282.

Elephantine, pls.35 and 42.

Antefokar, p.2.

Siut and Tifeh, pl.13, line 38.

The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.I, ls.XVII, XX, and XXI.

Cairo stelae 20010, 20546, 20780.

Berlin, vol.I, nos.7512, 13774/5, 15786.

Süddeutschen Sammlungen, vol.I, no.18.

British Museum stelae, vol.III, pl.32, and vol.IV, ls.32 and 33.

Louvre stela, C.1, pl.I.

Rec. de Tr v., 1 82, vol.III, p.115, no.107.

Cinquantenaire, E.4985.

Newberry, Liverpool Annals, 1912, vol.IV, tombs 11, 22 and 24.

Fischer, J.A.O.S., 1956, vol.LXXVI, ps.109/110.

Alliot, B.I.F.A.O., 1937, vol.XXXVII, p.101.

Müller, M.D.I.K., 1933, vol.IV, Abb.11

Lacau, Sarcophages, 28001, 28002, 28006, 28008, 28010, 28013, 28015, 28017, 28018, 28025/6.

Some local manifestations of the goddess are also mentioned:

Hthr nb(t) K<sup>2</sup>s, Hathor, lady of Gusa, Meir, vol.VI, pl.VI.

Hthr nbt 'ryt, Hathor, lady of Aryt, Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXVI and vol.II, pl.XXIV.

Examples of hmt ntr serving other deities:

hmt ntr P3ht, Prophetess of Pakht, Beni Hassan, vol.I, pls.XVIII, XXXV and XXXVI.

hmt ntr 3st, Prophetess of Isis, B.I.F.A.O., 1937, vol.XXXVII, p.101.

hmt ntr ʿmn, Prophetess of Amun, Rec. de Trav., 1910, vol.XXXII, p.151, Avignon 31.


Cairo stela 20026 mentions hmwt ntr, Prophetesses, in the temple of Osiris, First of the Westerners.

Cairo stela 20656 was owned by a hmt hr(t)-ntr, a prophetess of the necropolis. This woman was presumably connected with the funeral cults in some way. There are no Middle Kingdom examples of a hmt k3, prophetess of the k3, though some may have held this office, since there are Old Kingdom texts which refer to k3-priests and give male and female determinatives \*(39). For comments on the rights of women to participate

in funeral services and offering rituals, see below p.293.

Cairo stela 20776 mentions a hmt (ntr), but does not say which deity she served.

Leiden stela, pl.VI, no.7, mentions hmwt ntr in a general invocation of the staff of the temple.

iii)  , Mnw wršt, Watcher of Min.

Predictably, this title is only found on monuments from the Akhmim area, where Min was the principal deity. The nature of the duties of this office are unknown, and it would be unwise to assume that they included any astronomical observation, though the title itself certainly suggests this.

Examples:

British Museum stela, vol.II, pl.38. She is the owner.

Newberry, Liverpool Annals, 1912, vol.IV, ps.108 and 110.

Lacau, Sarcophages, nos.28001, 28006, 28010, 28011 and 28017.

iv)  , hnrwt, harem women.

During the New Kingdom most of the major deities, including some goddesses \*(40), were served by hnrwt, though by far the greatest number were attached to the cult of Amen-Re, King of the Gods. In the harem of Amen-Re the queen ranked as the wife of the god, the wife of the High Priest was the chief concubine, and the other inmates were drawn from the ranks of the leading Theban families.

Hnrwt are also found in the service of the gods during the Middle Kingdom, but their numbers are few. Their duties were probably confined to singing, rattling the sistrum, and perhaps dancing before the god, thus providing the requisite responses to the litany of the daily

service. There is no evidence from either the Middle or New Kingdom to suggest that these were true concubines, or sacred prostitutes such as served some of the Syrian mother goddesses. The Egyptian hnrwt were women of good family, married to officials, whose aim was to pass on their property and offices to their sons, an ambition which is hardly compatible with allowing their wives any degree of sexual licence, though before marriage such an act might be seen as one of piety. However, the appearance of hnrwt in the service of deities such as Min, Khnum, and Iwnmutef is suggestive of sexual acts in the interest of fertility.

Certain Ptolemaic texts refer to men and women, said to be "born Free" or "born within the precincts" meaning of the temple, whose mothers are listed by name, but whose fathers are described as "his name is not known" or "I know not his name". Thompson suggests that these might be the children of sacred prostitutes, and that the practice had been introduced during the Persian Period \*(41). If this is so, it is very surprising that there is no mention of this in Herodotus, who might be expected to have remarked on the phenomenon. It could seem more prudent to assume that the role of the hnrwt, even though they were not virgins, or nearly resembled that described in the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus, another document of Ptolemaic date: "..... and there shall be brought in (2) women, pure in body and virgin, with the hair of their bodies removed, their heads being adorned with wigs (.....) tambourines in their hands, ..... and they shall sing from the stanzas in this book in the presence of the god" \*(42).



### Examples:

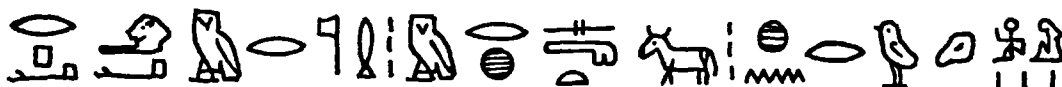
Lacau, Sarcophages, pl.II. This coffin belongs to a woman called Hnti, who was entitled imy-t-r hnrwt n Iwn-mwt.f, Overseer of the inmates of the harem of Iwnmutef.

Siut and Rifeh, pl.13, lines 29/30. Mention is made of the  
hnrwt n Wp-W3wt, the inmates of the hare of Wepwawet.

Griffith, Z.A.S., 1891, vol.XXIX, p.110. P pyrus Boulaq 18 mentions the prrwt Mntw m M3dw, the inmates of the harem of Montu of M3dw.

Koptos, pl.XII, no.1. This is only a fragment of a stela referring to officials of the temple, presumably of Min of Coptos, among whom were hnrwt.

Cairo stela 20024, line 7. The owner of this stela from Akhmim was no arch (hry-to '3) called Intf, a ong whose titles ere:



iry p't h3ty-' i y-r hmw ntr imy-r hmw hnrwt, the Hereditary prince and h3ty-' prince, the Overseer of priests and Overseer of the cows of the harem inmates. Considering the place of origin, and the fact that the title of imy-r hmw hnrwt occurs in conjunction with another religious title, it is reasonable to assume that these were in the service of the god in.

Cairo stela 20025, lin 7/8. This tel comes fr Abydos d  
the owner h ld e aral priestly titles including th of wr dī Dhwty,  
Cre test of the Five (i.e. High Pr' st) of Thoht. Another title was:



imy-r tpwt (?) špswt/Hmww nb Hmww, Overseer of the no le men of Khnum,

Lord of Hermopolis. Although the word hnrwt does not actually appear here, this stela has been included since it clearly refers to a recognised group of women in the service of the god.

v)   dryt, Kite.

The Greater and Lesser Kites, women playing the parts of the mourning Isis and Nephthys, are to be seen in most representations of funerals and on model funeral barges. Ideally the roles should doubtless have been played by the widow and sister of the deceased, but in practice this must frequently have been impractical, so the roles would have been allotted to professional mourners, more likely to priestesses, as they probably had to take part in the funeral liturgy.

In the tomb of Antefokar, where some of the more detailed scenes of a Middle Kingdom funeral have been preserved, the Kites are shown wearing very simple linen garments (see below p. 424, and pl.XC, E), and with hair cut very short (see below p.445, and pl.XCVII, D.1 a).

vi)   w'bt, pure one.

In order to enter the temple and perform their duties, the priests and priestesses would have ceremonially to purify themselves. While they ranked below the prophets and prophetesses (hmw ntr and hmwt ntr), the pure ones, male and female, still appear to hold priestly ranks, though they probably could not conduct the ceremonies which the prophets are shown performing.

Examples:

Cairo stelae 20056 and 20240. These two stelae both belong to the ss hry htm n w'rt tp-rsy, the scribe in charge of the seal of the Department of the Head of the South, whose mother held the position of

w'bt nt Hnsw n W3st, Pure one of Khonsu in Thebes.

Kahun Papyrus pl.IX, line 3. The widowed mother of a soldier ('h3wty) was a w'bt nt gs i3b, a Pure one of the gs i3b district \*(43). Since neither her husband or her son appear to have been officers, this woman may be assigned to Group 4.

Kahun Papyrus, pl.X, lines 7/12. The list of the members of the household of Sn-Wsrt-'nh included his son, his daughters, and several women designated dt, some of whose children were entitled w'bt. The word dt is usually translated as serf or peasant, but in this case, either the children of the dt have managed to attain a higher social rank, or it might be more appropriate to interpret dt as meaning a member of the household. Even allowing that the social status of these children may be greater than their mothers', it still shows that persons of relatively humble origins might hold some office in the religious hierarchy.

vii)  , hnwt n(t) 3Imn, A Lady of Amun.




This title appears on Cairo stela 20545, where it is born by the sister-in-law of the owner. Unfortunately, the offices of the owner, which might have given a clue, however indirect, to the social status of his sister-in-law, are not recorded, but this title, recalling that of hnwt nt hnwt nsw, Mistress of the King's women, suggests that she probably held an honourable place among the women attached to the service of the god Amun.

viii) Musicians and dancers.

Some of the titles grouped under this general heading belong to women from Groups 1 and 2, but others, particularly the simple singers

and dancers, were probably of more humble origins.


Examples:





   , š 'yt, Chantress.

šm'yt nt 3st, Chantress of Isis. Louvre stela, pl.LI, no.2

šm'yt nt Sbk, Chantress of Sobek. Rec. de Trav., 1910, vol.XXXII, p. 151.

Cairo stelae 20142 and 20777. It is not known which deity these women served.




 , sššt (?), Sistrum player. Petrie, Scarabs, pl.XV, no.BR and pl.XVI, no.F.


    , hmw, Musicians \*(44).

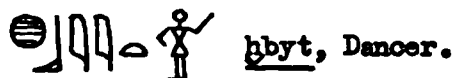
Leiden stela, pl.VII, no.7. On this stela they are invoked with other members of the staff of the temple.

Cairo stela 20026. Here also, the hmw are mentioned in a general invocation of temple staff, and here too their position would appear to be a lowly one since they are named after the prophets and prophetesses and the pure ones.

Meir, vol.II, pl.XV. These women appear in a scene showing male and female musicians in a procession in honour of the goddess Hathor. The men carry castanets, while the women rattle sistrum.

   , hsy, Singer. This title is usually applied to secular singers, but on Leiden stela, pl.VII, no.7, they are named among the temple personnel.

Kahun Papyrus, l.XXIV. The singers in question were attached to the temple of Senusret II at Lahun, but the word is written hsw, with a masculine determinative,  , so this may well refer to an all-male ensemble.



Cairo stela 20777. This woman was the daughter of a šm'yt, so she is included here on the assumption that she was a religious, rather than a secular performer.

Kahun Papyrus, pl.XXIV. These dancers were attached to the temple of Senusret II, but since the word is written hbw, with the masculine determinative, this may refer to an all-male troupe.

Antefokar, pl.XV. Singers and acrobatic dancers are shown, though not specifically named, taking part in a feast of Hathor.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XIX. This scene also shows performers at a festival of Hathor.

Singers and dancers are usually shown in funeral processions, and performing outside the tomb, e.g. Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XIII and XXIX, and vol.II, pls.XII, XIII and XVII; also Antefokar, pls. XXIII, XXVII and XXIX.

Unfortunately it is never made clear how many of the performers at a funeral were from the household of the deceased, and how many were attached to a temple. It would seem more reasonable to assume that, for so important an occasion, demanding specialised routines, the performers would be professionals, especially the www-dancers \*(45).

### C) Representations of women of Groups 1 and 2.

The three and a half millenia which separate us from the end of the Middle Kingdom have inevitably wrought havoc among the monuments of that era, but some notable pieces of sculpture have survived, relatively intact, though of others, only the shattered fragments remain.

Statues in stone can vary from life-size, or near life-size, monuments \*(46), through to small stone statuettes \*(47). Similarly, there must once have been near life-size statues in wood, though none of w men have survived \*(48), but the majority of works in wood were probably under three feet in height \*(49).

The extant stone statues are of both standing and seated figures, while the wooden ones are usually of standing figures, with hands at the sides and feet together, though occasionally one foot may be striding forward. Whatever the material or pose, the women are all portrayed as young and attractive, staring with placid confidence into eternity, half smiles on their lips. The face may have individual characteristics, which make it a recognisable portrait, but in every case the features have been idealised, and the acute observation and honest presentation of the artists who produced the portraits of the apparently melancholy Senusret III, are rare.

The tombs of the provincial nobility give very little insight into the daily occupations of the women of the family, unless scenes showing noblewomen receiving the homage and offerings of their retainers can be construed as a reflection of their role as supervisors of their households.

The posture and dress of these women is always very formal. They stand or sit, sometimes alone, sometimes with one arm round the shoulders or waist of their husband, in a conventional gesture of affection. Occasionally they may carry a flower, a flail, a napkin, a mirror, or an 'nh amulet, and a few have, what appears to be a staff with some sort of floral head (see below, Section V, p.467 and pl.CIII, .3 a/d).

It was also permissible for a noblewoman to be portrayed being served with refreshment by her servants \*(50), or having her hair dressed \*(51),

and this informal note is reserved in those scenes which introduce animals. Dogs, like the one under the chair of '3šyt \*(52), appear to have been the favourites, but, as in the Old Kingdom, monkeys were probably popular too \*(53), and cats were presumably also kept as pets, as in the New Kingdom, though portraits of such complacent felines as the one belonging to Queen Tiy \*(54) are regrettably lacking for the Middle Kingdom.

Also lacking for the Middle Kingdom are scenes showing a noblewoman playing the harp for the entertainment of her spouse, but scenes showing hunting and fishing trips in the marshes continued to be popular \*(55). The women might occasionally be allowed to hold a spear or a throwing stick, or gather up the slain waterfowl, but, apart from this, they do not appear to have taken a very active role in the day's sport, confining their activities to picking flowers and dutifully admiring the hunter's skill.

Noblewomen are shown with their menfolk at feasts and festivals, and, where such scenes have survived, accompanying them on the pilgrimage to Abydos \*(56). In the few extant scenes of religious processions, priestesses are shown bestowing the blessing of Hathor on the worshippers, by proffering mnit-necklaces and sistra \*(57).

The restricted space available on a stela, limited even further the number of poses in which women could be represented. They are seated on a chair or the floor, or standing, usually rather stiffly, in one of the traditional poses, and they may sometimes carry one of the items listed above. A woman may be shown with her arm round her husband, and very occasionally, she may be shown taking a drink.

There are, however, some notable exceptions to these repetitive scenes. There are many examples of women holding offerings and standing behind their

brothers, who are performing the offering ritual for their parents, and, of much greater interest, are those stelae which portray women alone, facing a deceased relative and pouring a libation or presenting an offering, as if they were performing the offering ritual, without the assistance of a man. On these occasions, however, they are never shown wearing the leopard skin of a sm priest \*(58).

Women may not have been able to act as the officiating priest at the actual funeral, but there is a direct reference to a girl, and she was probably rather a young girl, actually making funeral offerings \*(59), which would support the pictorial evidence from the stelae quoted in the previous paragraph.

The multiplicity of requirements for adequate funeral provisions meant that one had to go to considerable expense to bury someone properly. "For this reason the service thus rendered seems to have constituted a presumptive right to be considered as the lawful heir" \*(60). This would seem to be the reasoning behind a letter, possibly intended for the relative \*(61), written by one Tti-'3, who recalled how his paternal grandparents had given succour to certain Mn'-pw. When Mniw-pw eventually died, Nni, the father of Tti-'3, urged his wife, who presumably had inherited the sense of obligation from her parents, to "Bury him (i. e. Mniw-pw) and inherit from him" (lines 2 and 3). It is significant that Nn did not suggest that he should take over the direction of the funeral, but that his wife must take responsibility, so he must eventually be unable to do this, besides then having claim on the fortune of iw-ow.

By the New Kingdom, however, there are indications that, in



some quarters, it was not considered desirable for one's funeral cult to be too heavily reliant on the efforts of a daughter alone. In year 7 of Horemheb, for example, the tomb of Imn-m was made over to H3y, because he was married to the daughter of the owner, and in the absence of a son, the tomb had been falling into decay \*(62). Whether this was general practice, or whether the daughter of Imn-m was a lazy trustee, is not clear.

### GROUP 3

Many graves of Middle Kingdom date have yielded small statuettes and figurines of young women, some naked, others in gay, patterned clothes. These models, or the girls they represented, were probably destined to cheer their masters' leisure hours in the Hereafter, as they had done in this life (see below, Section V, p. 413 ).

The presence of numerous female servants in the households of the nobility of the Middle Kingdom is well-attested in tomb paintings and reliefs, but it is not possible to say, with any degree of certainty, whether these were only servants, who might or might not be called upon to meet the sexual demands of their masters \*(63), or whether some of them at least ranked as official concubines.

It is generally agreed that Egyptian noblemen kept concubines, but there is no evidence concerning the number involved, for they and their children usually remained anonymous \*(64), the wife and her offspring receiving all the recognition and honour in her husband's tomb and on his stel though presumably, the richer the man, the more concubines he could afford to support, should he feel so inclined. The amount of respect accorded to a concubine by other members of the household would doubtless depend on the

degree of favour shown her by her master, and this could mean that she was granted precedence over all the servants, and perhaps over members of the family as well \*(65). Outside the household, the community at large would probably treat a concubine with a degree of respect commensurate with the wealth and social standing of her lover and, while this would not perhaps be equal to the deference reserved for the wife, there is no reason to suppose that the role of concubine was ever considered in any way degrading, or an offence against morality.

1)  , s3wt (?).

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.1, pls.XXXII and XXXV. T3t.

Newberry, Liverpool Annals, 1912, vol.IV, ps.103/4, tomb 4.

The exact meaning of this word is regrettably obscure. At Beni Hasan, T3t is also said to be the rt nb.s, the Acquaintance of her Lord, the lord in this case being Hnm(w)-htp the second, but she is never said to be his wife, and only once is she given the title of nb pr, and that, significantly enough, is in the tomb of one of her sons \*(66). She bore Hnm(w)-htp three children, and in the great procession in his tomb, she and her children are shown standing directly behind the wife, Hty, and her children, while in another scene she sits in the stern of a boat, while Hty sits in the prow.

T3t was undoubtedly a highly favoured concubine, and it may be that the title s3wt recorded her status, perhaps being derived from the word s3wt, precious things. On the other hand, this title is found in a tomb at Akhmin, which belonged to a woman, and a s3wt appears in the procession of her servants. S3wt may, therefore, not mean concubine, but be the title

of a female official in a large household, who fulfilled the role of "Lady Treasurer", in which case, Tjt happened to hold this office, besides also being the concubine of Hnm(w)-hpt. A sdjwtt also appears in the tomb of Mry at Athribis. The figure is badly damaged but she was apparently standing behind the seated figures of Mry and his wife, fanning them, and this gives little indication of the duties of a sdjwtt.

ii)  , hbswt, concubine.

The meaning of the word hbswt would appear to have changed with the passing of time. In the Twentieth Dynasty the word was used of 'Ink-sw-nḡa, who was, or was about to become, the second wife of the priest 'Ima-h'iw \*(67), but in the early Middle Kingdom, it was applied to 'Iwt-n-hb \*(68), who, as James has pointed out \*(69), held a position in the household, which is best described as that of concubine, since she is less than a wife, but of more importance than a servant girl with whom Hk3-nht might have enjoyed a passing liaison.

iii)  , 'nht.


The meaning of this word is very doubtful, and indeed, it is probably only a truncated writing of the title of 'nht nt mwt (see below p. 305 ). Thus the word 'nht may not mean concubine at all, though there may well have been 'nht (nt mwt) who did become concubines.

Examples:

el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.XXIV and p.37. This woman is shown in the middle of a procession of the family of Dhwtj-hpt. She walks behind one of his daughters and in front of two more. Besides being an 'nht she is also said to be mrwt.f irrt hst.f m hrt hrw nt r' nb, his beloved who wins his

praises every day, which would be appropriate epithets for a concubine.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XIII. One of the dozen women of the harem of W3-htp the sixth was either an 'nht or an 'nht nt n1wt, the hieroglyphs are not clear. Of all these women, only one is actually said to be his wife (hnt.f) in the tomb, though elsewhere, two more are said to be his wives (see above p. 262). Five of the women in the tomb are entitled nbt pr, which is a synonym for wife (see above ps. 262/266), and two more are s3t h3ty-, so they must have been wives too, for women of this rank would hardly be concubines. The rest are just said to be wrt.f nt st 1b.f, his beloved, his darling, and among these is the 'nht (nt n1wt), who could have been a wife too, but need only have been a concubine. The scenes showing these women are so badly damaged, however, that very possibly they had other titles, including nbt pr, and hnt, which have now disappeared.

iv)  , 3byt.

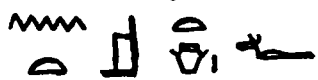
On Cairo stela 20530 a woman, whose relationship to the owner is otherwise not known, is designated 3byt.f wrrt.f. The word 3byt may be connected with 3bt, a relative \*(70), but it is very rare. Alternatively 3byt might be connected with the word 3bi, desire, in which case, the holder is likely to be a concubine.

v)  wrt.f, his beloved, and other terms of endearment.

The words wrt.f are normally preceded by a kin-term. They are regularly used in conjunction with hnt.f, but also frequently appear after wrt.f and s3(t).f. On Cairo stela 20341, however, wrt.f is applied to a

woman, to whom no kin-term is attached. Most of the stela is occupied by inscriptions concerning the owner, his parents, his children, his wife, and his sisters, listed in that order, but in the top left hand corner, in the only relief on the stela, are the figures of the owner and art.f Šdī. No other woman on the stela is called Šdī, but she must have been a very important member of his household to be portrayed in the position normally reserved for the wife of the owner, so she may have been his concubine.

On Cairo stela 20091, art.f Hty is shown standing between two of the sons of the co-owner, Inpw-htp, but no further indication is given concerning her position in the family.

Another term of endearment, usually only applied to members of the immediate family is , at at ih.f, literally "of the place of his heart", i.e. his dearly beloved, but there is a unique instance on a stela in the Louvre, where this phrase is used of a servant-girl (see below p. 321, C.15, pl.LIV), which suggests that she may have been a concubine, as well as holding an office within the household.

In the New Kingdom, the phrase ant.f nbt pr, his sister, the lady of the house, became a synonym for wife, while sn(t).f (or .s) was used in love poetry to signify beloved. Though numerous English kinship terms have all been accepted as translations of sn(t) (see above, Section I, Part 2), there is no indication that at least on stelae, ant.f was ever used for "his wife" during the Middle Kingdom, though it may occasionally have been used of a sister who was also the wife of the owner.

There are a few documents of the Middle Kingdom, however, where ant was used of a woman whom the context clearly shows to be either the wife

or the concubine of the man with whom she is associated. Such a case is to be found in a model letter published by Hayes \*(71), and in two letters to the dead \*(72), both of which begin with the words ant ddt n sn.s, it is a sister who speaks to her brother, though in both cases the women have apparently born children to their dead "brothers".

Direct written references to concubines, and the titles and epithets applicable to them, are therefore scarce, and are often difficult to interpret, as might be expected, since the bulk of the available material is drawn from funerary monuments, where the wife of the deceased was normally accorded the greatest honour. However, besides the material already discussed, stelae and tombs do include certain inscriptions and scenes which may be interpreted as indirect references to concubines and their children.

Although there were no absolute rules governing the positioning of figures on a stela, there were certain conventions, which were so well-established, (see Excursus D, p. 503 ), that they would not be ignored, except for a very important reason. One such convention was that unless they were actually performing a service for their employer, servants were either shown at the bottom of the stela, or very occasionally, behind the chair of their master or mistress, and their figures were usually drawn on a smaller scale than those of the members of the family. There are a few stelae, however, where the figures of servants, drawn on the same scale as those of their employers, are displayed in prominent positions, clearly indicating that they enjoyed the especial favour of their masters. One such woman was actually the nurse of the owner of the stela \*(73), but the rest were household servants, who may also have been

favoured concubines.

Examples:

Attention has already been drawn to this phenomenon in the discussion of individual stelae in Section II, so the examples are only briefly listed here. The most interesting cases are as follows:

Cairo stela 20022, which concerns two wb3yt (see above p.44 ).

Cairo stela 20158, which concerns an '3nt (see above p. 70 ).

Cairo stela 20476, which concerns an 'h'yt (see above p.102 ).

Cairo stela 20751, which concerns a hnt (see above p.104 ).

el Arabah, pl.XII, no.E.312, which concerns a hnt and her son (see above p.235).

B.I.F.A.O., 1930, vol.XXX, p.111, which concerns a hnt and her son (see above p.241).

Other stelae record the names of children of the owners, born of women who are not said to be the wives of the owners. This does not necessarily mean that the women were concubines. It has already been suggested that, if a woman had been divorced, her spouse might be unwilling directly to acknowledge before the gods, that she had, or ever had had, any claim upon him. Alternatively, if a man's first wife died, she might be provided with her own separate monument, or perhaps the man's second wife preferred not to have her predecessor specifically acknowledged as such. However, the possibility still remains that these stelae may record the existence of favoured children, born out of wedlock, whose mothers may therefore be described as concubines.

**Examples:**

All occurrences of children, born to women who were not said to be the wives of the owners, were discussed individually in Section II, so the interesting cases are only briefly described here.

Cairo stela 20057. The owner has a wife, but his three sons were born to two other women, neither of whom was said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p. 54 ).

Cairo stela 20260. The three sons of the owner were born of Wit, but she is neither said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p.79 ).

Cairo stela 20290. The children of the owner were born of Shm-htp, but she is neither said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p. 82 )

Cairo stela 20296. The owner is married to Sjt-Šm<sup>y</sup>, but his only son was born of Sjt-Wsr, who is neither said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p.82 ).

Cairo stela 20338. The only child of the owner is born of a woman who is neither said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p.86 ).

Cairo stela 20547. The owner is married to Iy and they had several children, but he also had a daughter by Hty, who is neither said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p.116 ). The grouping on the stela is also of interest. The owner and his daughter by Hty are shown on the left hand, facing Iy and three of her children.

Cairo stela 20750. The owner is married to Intf and has a son by her, but he has two more sons by Mny, who is neither said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p. 138).



Louvre stela, G.40, pl.XXIII. The wife of the owner is named as Snb.s-ni, but at least one of the sons of the owner is born of Spst, though she is not said to be his wife, nor is she entitled nbt pr (see above p. 158).

Guimet stela, G.11, pl.X. The owner has a daughter by his wife, Hr-m-hb, but his son was born of Rn.s-snb, who is neither said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p.166).

Florence stela 2504, photograph 23. The owner is married to Sjt-Hi and has several children by her, but he also has a son by Innw and a son and two daughters by Rn.f-'nh, though neither woman is said to be his wife, nor is either entitled nbt pr (see above p.166).

Berlin stela, vol.I, p.203, no.7287. The son of the owner is born of Irs, who is entitled hkrt nsw, but not nbt pr, and is not said to be the wife of the owner (see above p.180).

Leiden, pl.XXIII, no.24. The nbt pr Hm is the wife of the owner, but his only child is born of Swk, who is neither said to be his wife, nor entitled nbt pr (see above p. 206).

The appearance, in tomb paintings, of children born of women who were not the wives of the deceased, similarly indicated the presence of concubines within the household. Attention has already been drawn to the honourable role accorded to Tjt and her children in the tomb of Hm(w)-htp the second and in his tomb at el Kab, Sbk-nht acknowledged a daughter by a woman, who is entitled hkrt nsw, but not nbt pr, and is not said to be his wife. The figure of this girl is, however, shown behind the children of the wife \*(74).

Among the many retainers shown in the tombs of the provincial nobles, there were probably some concubines and their children. In the tomb of Hnm(w)-htp the second of Beni Hasan, for example, there are two men \*(75), both said to be the son of (s3) . Hnm(w)-htp. Admittedly the name Hnm(w)-htp must have been very popular at Beni Hasan at this time, but it is so rare for the names of the fathers of retainers to be included that these two, who were both well-placed in the hierarchy of the provincial court, may have been the sons of Hnm(w)-htp, though born of women who enjoyed less favour than T3t \*(76).

The title hrd n k3p, child of the nursery, is not uncommon at this period, and a stela in Brooklyn \*(77) mentions the office of hk3y n k3p, magician of the nursery, which might be taken to mean that large nurseries, such as would be attached to formal harems, were a regular feature of life. It is likely, however, that the nursery referred to in these titles was the royal nursery, and the harem mentioned in a letter published by Hayes \*(78) is likely to be the royal harem. Certainly there is no evidence to suggest the existence of specially constituted harems, other than that of the king.

#### GROUP 4

Included in this group are the wives of artisans and craftsmen, whether they were attached to the temples, the noble households, or were independent operatives; the wives of common soldiers, sailors, and hunters, of the higher ranking household servants of the nobility; of scribes of the lower grades, and of small, independent traders.

There are no figures available on which to base an estimate of the

population of Egypt in the Middle Kingdom, nor is it known what percentage of the whole the class under discussion would have formed.

The artists and craftsmen who produced the art treasures of the Middle Kingdom worked in anonymity, never signing their masterpieces, so it is not possible to trace the career of an individual.


Members of this class as a whole, though lacking the resources of the nobility, could afford a decent burial, and some could afford to erect stelae for themselves and their families. Their tombs, however, were small and undecorated so, unless their personal possessions, some of which would be inscribed, escaped the depredations of the tomb robbers, even their names were lost. If information concerning these men is scarce, references to the female members of their families are almost non-existent. Some are named on the stelae of their husbands or parents, and some may have been represented in the anonymous ranks of offering-bearers, portrayed in the tombs of the wealthy, but details concerning their daily life and social standing are meagre in the extreme.

#### 1) nbt pr.

The main discussion concerning the significance of this title has already been presented, so the only point to be considered here is whether this synonym for wife was used of the women of Group 4 with the same regularity that it was used of Groups 1 and 2.

The title nbt pr was apparently used of the wives of the more important officials attached to the persons and households of the nobility \*(79), and of the wives of some scribes. However, an analysis of the stelae owned by craftsmen presents a different picture. Naturally the numbers of stelae involved are not large, but, on the whole, it would seem that, though some

of the daughters and sisters of these men might be said to be nbt pr, the wife of the owner was always simply said to be hmt.f, without any reference to nbt pr. This is too marked to be a co-incidence, so some explanation must be sought to account for the omission of the title. The answer may lie in the literal meaning of nbt pr itself, the Lady of the House, which surely implies one who directs the affairs of a household and has servants under her. The wives of master-craftsmen, of officers and successful scribes might have several servants to direct, but, in more humble establishments, there would be few, if any, servants, so the wives there would not rule their houses in the same sense as their more affluent sisters. Nbt pr may therefore be a synonym for wife, but it would only be of those whose wealth was such that they had a household of several people to manage.

11)  , 'nht nt nwt.

When this title occurs in texts of the Ramesside Period, it is usually translated as citizenship \*(80), and it is therefore included in Group 4, because many of the women of this group would be town-dwellers. It is doubtful, however, whether the word citizenship adequately conveys the significance of the title, or the rank of the bearer, particularly in the Middle Kingdom, when it occurs so rarely that it can hardly have been a general designation for a town-dweller, or even for a middle class town dweller. The occurrences of the title of 'nht nt tpt nsw, which may have had something of the same meaning, will also be considered here.

Examples:

Cairo stela 20530. The owner of this stela is a wr mwt Šm'w, a

Magnate of the Tens of Upper Egypt, but his relationship to the 'nht nt nwt is not explained.

Florence stela, 2559, photograph 35. This woman is the wife of the owner, an imy-r shtyw, an Overseer of peasants. She is named again on another stela in Florence, 2561, photograph 32, and on Cairo stela 20520, where she is shown to be the mother of a wr mdw Šm'w.

Berlin stela, vol.I, p.191, no.7286. The relationship between this woman and the owner of the stela is unknown.

Verschiedenen Sammlungen, pl.III, no.3. The wife of the owner, and her mother. The owner was a w'b-priest.

British Museum stela, vol.IV, pl.24. The relationship between this woman and the owner of the stela is not stated.

The above examples have all been of women entitled 'nht nt nwt. The following examples are all of 'nht nt tpt nsw.

Athens and Constantinople, pl.III, no.10. The 'nht nt tpt nsw is married to a wr mdw Šm'w and their son is also a wr mdw Šm'w.

British Museum stela, vol.IV, pl.37. This woman is the wife of w'rtw n tt hkj, Controller of the Ruler's Table.

Bolton, 10.20.12. Two women, both said to be 'nht nt tpt nsw, are the sisters of the owner, who is a rh nsw, a King's Acquaintance.

Florence stela 2553, photograph 34. This woman is the wife of the owner, a sš n hprt wr(t), Scribe of the Great Prison.



Cairo stela 20743. The relationship of two women, both said to be ('nht nt) tpt nsw, to the owner is unknown, but they are shown with eight men, five of whom are entitled wr mdw Šm'w.


An examination of the above examples shows that not one of the 'nh̄t nt n̄wt was married to an 'nh̄ n n̄wt, so, whatever the significance of the title, it was not one acquired by marriage to a man of that rank. Nor can it be shown that there was any single title held by men which automatically entitled the women of their families to become an 'nh̄t nt n̄wt or an 'nh̄t nt tpt nsw. However, the title of wr mdw Šm'w does occur several times in the preceding examples, suggesting that the attainment of this rank, more often than others, would entitle the women of the family to one of the ranks under discussion.

A similar title, though one born by men only, is 'nh̄ n tt hk̄3, and thus gives a clue to the possible meaning of 'nh̄(t) n(t) n̄wt and 'nh̄t nt tpt nsw. An 'nh̄ n tt hk̄3 must surely be understood to mean someone who had the right to live off the table of the ruler, that is from the bounty of the ruler, and an entry in Papyrus Boulaq 18 suggests that a group of men, all entitled 'nh̄ n n̄wt, were similarly drawing an allowance from the royal household \*(81).

It therefore seems likely that the 'nh̄(t) n(t) n̄wt and the 'nh̄t nt tpt nsw were people who, for reasons unknown \*(82), but probably for services rendered by them or their families to the state, were entitled to draw at least part of their maintenance, either directly from the royal household, or indirectly via the officials of the district in which they lived.

Besides what might be considered to amount to a pension, the women at least, may also have been entitled to look to the state, or their municipality, for some degree of protection. If this were so, it would add a new dimension to the crimes of P3-nb̄i, who caused such a scandal

in Thebes in the Twentieth Dynasty \*(83). High on the list of his crimes were tomb robbery and the debauching (   , nk) of several women entitled 'nht nt niwt', including a mother and daughter. Rape has always been regarded as a particularly despicable crime \*(84), but even if P3-nbi had seduced, rather than raped, these women, if an 'nht nt niwt' was under the protection of the city where she lived, then his actions would be especially severely condemned.

Another title which may have a similar meaning is , nahyt nt niwt. It is difficult to find an adequate translation for this title, but nahyt must clearly be connected with the verb nah, which means to be poor, and with the noun nah(y), which can variously be interpreted as an orphan or a private person or a freeman of low degree \*(85).

#### Examples:

Cairo stela 20104. The relationship between this woman and the owner of the stela is not recorded. She appears at the bottom of the stela among retainers and servants, so she cannot have been of any great importance.

Cairo stela 20266. This woman is the sister of the owner, who is a ss, scribe.

Cairo stela 20392. By her position on the stela, this woman must have been closely related to the owner, an imy-r pr ntr, Steward of the god.

Süddeutschen Sammlungen, vol.I, pl.II, no.3. This woman is the wife of the owner, the imy-r st n šn'w, Overseer of the Great Storehouse.

Kahun Papyri, pl.IX, lines 4/7. The women in question are the paternal grandmother and three paternal aunts of an 'hjwtj', soldier. These women must all have been widowed or single, or they would not be members of their young relative's household.

They are all said to be nahyt nt hrtyw ntr w'rt mhty, a nahyt of the stemenascons of the Northern Administrative District.

Brecklyn Museum, ps.62/63 and Pl.XLI: 145. Three women on this stela are all said to be nahyt nt hr-prw, a nahyt of the servants.

Since some at least of these women are said to be members of middle class families, the term nahyt can hardly signify simply a poor woman in this context. It could be, however, that at some time in their lives, they were under the guardianship of some town or guild, as Griffith suggested \*(86). This could have been because they had been widowed or orphaned, and the rank, or past services of their families to the community, or to the institution in question, entitled them to some support or protection.

iii) Religious titles.

It is not known what percentage, if any, of the women of Group 4 were eligible for religious appointments, or what rank they could attain in the temple hierarchy during the Middle Kingdom. Evidence for later periods suggests that a few must have been admitted, for there are cases of the wives of weavers and shoemakers among the chantresses of Amun \*(87). In general, it is safer to assume that women of Group 4 would only enter the lower grades of the priesthood.

#### GROUP 5

This group is composed of those servants who can be shown to have held positions of especial authority or responsibility within large households. On the stelae of their masters they appear with the other household servants, usually in the bottom register, but in the tombs of their employers they are often depicted standing before all the other servants,



usually in close proximity to the family of the owner.

Many of the women of Group 5 may well have been born and married into Group 4, but it is more convenient to examine them separately, and, indeed, some of them may have considered themselves to have been of a higher social consequence than many members of Group 4, because their duties brought them into close contact with their employers.

1)  , mn't, nurse.

Nurses represent the largest single group of servants to be named on the stelae and in the tombs of their masters.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXV.

el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.XXX.

el Kab, pls.V and XI.

Cairo stelae 20018 (2 of them), 20057, 20323, 20352, 20426 (3 of them), 20436, 20441, 20456, 20516, 20540 (3 of them), 20580, 20581, 20607 20644, 20724, 20742 (2 of them).

British Museum stelae, vol.II, pls.6, 42 and 44, and vol.IV, pl.14

Guimet stela C.14, pl.XIII.

Louvre stela C.168, pl.LVI (3 of them).

Süddeutschen Sammlungen, vol.I, pl.VIII, no.12 and vol.II, pl.V,

No.8.

Rec. de Trav., 1882, vol.III, p.117, no.107, and p.123, no.10; 1890, vol.XIII, p.114, no.24 (2 of them) and p.117, no.28 (3 of them).

Leiden stela, pl.XXXVII, no.48.

Vienna stela, p.23, I.10, no.51.

el Arabah, pls. IV and V, E.11, and pl.XIII, E.172.

Tombs of the Courtiers, pls.XXII and XXVIII.

Abydos, vol.III, pl.XIV, fig.2.

J.E.A., 1939, vol.XXV, pl.XX:2 and pl.XXI:4.

Florence stela 2564, photograph 37.

J.E.A., 1928, vol.XIV, pl.XX:1, and p.240, fig.2.

Griffith, Z.A.S., 1891. vol.XXIX, p.107.


There are also some statuettes showing women suckling babies, but there are no inscriptions to say if these are their own, or other peoples' children \*(88).

Although nurses appear on so many stelae, only two of those listed above were actually owned, or rather part-owned, by nurses. These are Cairo stelae 20018 and 20441, which were jointly owned by two groups of servants, both of which included nurses. Even though it may have been rare for a nurse to own a stela, the existence of the fine funerary statuette of Sjt-Snfrw \*(89), shows that some at least of these women were able to acquire costly items of burial equipment.

There are no examples of nurses bearing the title nbt pr, though the daughters of the two nurses on Cairo stela 20018 did claim this rank.

On only one stela is there any indication as to the possible identity of the husband of a nurse, and there she is shown sitting in the top right hand corner of a stela \*(90), facing the owner across an offering table, as if she were his wife. The owner is an iry-pdt, a bowman, which is exactly the rank one would expect the husband of a nurse to be. The husbands of many of the nurses may be concealed among the other retainers named on stelae and in tombs, but it is not surprising if their names are omitted, since even the names of the fathers of the owners of stelae were frequently omitted. Thus there is no reason to assume that the nurses were unmarried

mothers, perhaps the concubines of the fathers of their foster-children, though this may have happened occasionally.

The use of the determinative  in the word mn't suggests that these women began their careers as actual wet-nurses. In that part of his discourse which dealt with the debt owed by a son to his mother (see below p. 344 ), the scribe Inyy notes that a child might be breast-fed for three years. This would account for a scene in a New Kingdom tomb, which shows a naked child being suckled, while standing on its own feet \*(91). A long period of breast feeding may be a conscious attempt on the part of the mother to avoid another pregnancy, but it may also be caused by environmental factors. Breast feeding is inevitably prolonged in those societies where fresh milk is not readily available to all, where prepared baby foods are unknown, and where roots and cereals form the staple diet. In Egypt, bread was the basic element of the diet, and this could be hard to chew, and almost invariably contained impurities \*(92), so prolonged nursing, until the child could cope with the imperfections of the adult diet, was essential.

If a woman died in childbirth, unhappily a frequent occurrence in the ancient world, or if she lived only to have her milk dry up, it might be difficult to procure a constant supply of fresh milk for the infant, and even if fresh milk was available, in the days before glass bottles and an appreciation of the necessity to sterilise such utensils, the odds must always have been against the successful rearing of a child whose mother could not suckle it. Besides these cases, there must have been plenty of occasions when women from Groups 1 and 2 found it more convenient to engage a wet-nurse than to suckle their own children so that they could return to their administrative duties and social pleasures.

There must therefore have been a regular demand for the services of wet-nurses, though, thanks to the high infant mortality rate, and the prolonged period of lactation in the human female, it was probably not difficult to obtain the services of suitable women.

Though she may have started in a household as a wet-nurse, once her charge had been successfully weaned and brought through infancy, the mn't probably stayed on to assist in the rearing of the child. This would explain why so many foster-children retained memories vivid and fond enough to warrant the inclusion of nurses on so many stelae.

The progression from wet-nurse to nanny would explain why several families employed more than one mn't (see the above list of examples), for if a new baby arrived, and the old wet-nurse no longer had any milk, then another mn't would be required.

The honour and affection in which a mn't might be held by her nursing, is illustrated on the stelae and in the tombs of their foster-children. The figures of the nurses, like those of other servants, are shown standing stiffly, or occasionally kneeling, and they sometimes carry food offerings, though the nurses may hold some personal possession of the employers, such as a flail, a fan, or a mirror.

In the tomb of Hnm(w)-h̄tp the second of Beni Hasan the nurse is placed at the head of the procession of household servants, immediately behind the figures of the wife and concubine of Hnm(w)-h̄tp, and their respective children, while in the tomb of Sbk-nh̄t of el Kab the mn't is given the epithet nt st ḥb.f, a term of endearment usually reserved for members of the immediate family. There is a stela in the British Museum \* (93) on which the owner names only himself, his mother, his wife, and his

nurse, omitting any reference to his father and all other members of his family.

Papyrus Boulaq 18 records the existence of a pr mn'wt, a house of nurses, which was attached to the royal household \*(94), but, though this must undoubtedly have been a large and important institution, there is no information available concerning the individual women who served there. In all probability an appointment to the royal nursery would lead to the advancement of a woman's family, as in the Eighteenth Dynasty, which provides such interesting cases as that of the family of Mn-hpr-R'-snb \*(95). His father bore no state office, but his mother was a royal nurse, and Mn-hpr-R'-snb himself rose to be First Prophet of Amun, which must surely indicate that his royal foster-brother advanced him in his career. Similarly, it would be natural for noblemen to advance the careers of their foster-brothers and foster-sisters. This would account for the rise of the son of one nurse to the rank of iry-'t n 'h, Hall-keeper of the Palace \*(96). Certainly, despite the limited space available of stelae, several men chose to record the names of their nurses' children.

#### Examples:

Cairo stelae 20018, 20352, 20724 and 20742.



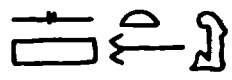
Süddeutschen Sammlungen, vol.I, pl.VIII, no.12.

Louvre stela, C.168, pl.LVI.

J.E.A., 1928, vol.XIV, pl.XX:1.

el Arabah, pl.XIII, E.172

Florence stela 2564, photograph 37.

Other terms used for nurses were  , 3tyt \*(97),  , hnatt \*(98), and  , syt \*(99), but these only occur very rarely.

ii)  , w'rtyt, administratrix.

The exact duties of this office are unknown, though it is likely that they were of considerable importance, as is suggested by the procession of servants in a tomb at Beni Hasan, where the w'rtyt follows the mn't at the head of the procession.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXV. Apart from the known concubine of Hnm(w)-htp the second, the w'rtyt is the only servant to be shown with her children. The name of their father is omitted, unless, of course, it was Hnm(w)-htp himself.

Cairo stela 20025.

Louvre stela, C.168, pl.LVI.

Vienna stela, p.23, I.10, no.51.

iii) 

For the discussion of this title, see above p.295 .

iv)  , hryt pr.

This title may be literally translated as "one who is over the house", that is perhaps something in the nature of a housekeeper. If that is a reasonably accurate rendering, then this woman held an important position with responsibility over her fellow servants.

Examples:

Cairo stela 20561.

British Museum stela, vol.II, pl.16.

Louvre stela, C.167, pl.LV.

## GROUP 6

The members of Group 5 were considered together because their

occupations suggested that they all held positions of special responsibility within large households. The members of Group 6 may not have had such responsibilities, but their occupations often required skill and training, and on occasion could bring a woman into contact, even intimate contact, with the family of her employer, thus clearly raising her above the level of those who did the heavy, relatively unskilled work about the house and estate.

Inevitably the divisions between these groups, particularly between Groups 6 and 7, are somewhat artificial, and it was possible for a woman to be a highly favoured personal attendant, and yet be of servile status.

i) Ladies' maids.

Since these women are rarely named and only occasionally have their titles recorded, they can only be positively identified when they are shown actually in attendance on their mistresses. They may be portrayed standing behind the lady's chair, or performing some personal service, such as arranging her hair, fanning her, or presenting her with refreshment.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XII.

el Bersheh, vol.I, pls. XXIV and XXX.

Antefokar, pls.III, XXX and XXXIII.

Meir, vol.II, pls.V and XV.

el Kab, pls.V and VIII.

Mo'alla, pl.XLIII.

J.N.E.S., 1956, vol.XV, pls.VIII/X.

British Museum stelae, vol.II, pl.34, and vol.IV, pl.33.


The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.I, pls.XX and XXXII, vol.II, pls.XXIII, XV and XX, and vol.III, pls.II and III.

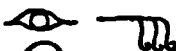
Occasionally titles are recorded for some of these attendants.

Examples:


 , nšt, hairdresser. British Museum stelae, vol.II, pl.34 and vol.IV, pl.33.

James. The Hekanakhte Papers, pls.6/6A, line 39.

Brooklyn Papyrus, pl.VIII, line 2. This woman is also said to be a  , hmt (see below p.325 ).

 , irt, hairdresser.

This is the feminine form of a title that is more common in the masculine form, and which is more frequently found in the Old Kingdom. This later example occurs in the tomb of Nfrw, the sister/wife of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep of the Eleventh Dynasty, see J.N.E.S., 1956, vol.XV, pls.VIII and X.

 , hmt.s nt dt.s mrt.s irt hst.s r' nb, her body servant whom she loves, who does that which she praises every day. This personal maid appears on Louvre stela G.15, pl.LIV, where she is shown standing behind the chair of her mistress.

Personal attendants, even if they were slaves, might wield considerable influence within a household, if they managed to gain the confidence and affection of their employer. The sage 'nh-ššnk specifically warned his readers against providing their wives with maids if they themselves had no servant \*(100), perhaps because this would provide a wife with an ally against her husband. He also urged his readers not to confide a secret to either wife or maid-servant, since both were bound to be indiscreet \*(101).

Naturally, an unscrupulous servant who learnt the secrets of her employer, was in a position to do great mischief. In literature, this is reflected by a story in the Westcar Papyrus which relates how the



maidservant of Rwd-ddt betrayed her mistress, after having been reprimanded for some fault \*(102). In real life some servants may have betrayed their masters in revenge for physical mistreatment, for beatings were a common form of punishment for many offences, and 'nh-ššnk was of the opinion that no servant would show proper respect unless he was beaten \*(103). The idea of treachery on the part of a servant was clearly abhorrent to the Egyptians, and the unfaithful maid of Rwd-ddt is evidently thought to have met her just deserts when she is eaten by a crocodile.

ii)  , pṛt nt r.s.

This title is found on the verso of the Brooklyn Papyrus, and Hayes tentatively suggests that since it is literally translated as "Geer-forth-from-her-mouth", it might be interpreted as eloquent one or reciter \*(104). If this is correct, then this woman must have had training and even a certain amount of education, and must be among the more important members of the household hierarchy, even though she was also a hmt (see below p. 326 ).

iii)  , htt pr, House servant (?).

The exact nature of the duties attached to this office are unknown, but it is likely to have been a relatively important position because the women said to be htt pr are prominently placed in the procession of servants shown in the tomb of Hnm(w)-htp the second of Beni Hasan.

Examples:

Cairo stela 20024.

Louvre stela, C.196, pl.LIX.

Rec. de Trav., 1882, vol.III, p.117, no.107.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.X, XVIII, XIX, XX and XXV. A variation



Cairo stela 20257. This actually belongs to a singer, who has a daughter, but does not name her husband, if any.

Cairo stela 20732.

Louvre stela, C.5, Pl.IX.

Leiden stela, pl.XIII, no.30.

Rec. de Trav., 1890, vol.XIII, p.117, no.28.

Griffith, Z.A.S, 1891, vol.XXIX, p.107.

Simpson, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, pl.81, Metropolitan Museum of Art stela 63. 154. There are three singers named as members of the household of Rn-snb. They are named again on his second stela, Carlsberg, pl.XCIX, A690, A.E.I.N. 964.

In the New Kingdom, female musicians are most commonly shown playing the lute, various kinds of flutes, and percussion instruments, while the harp is usually reserved for male virtuosi, a high proportion of whom seem to have been blind. Reliefs of the Middle Kingdom, however, show both male and female harpists, and the portrayal of defective sight is exceptional \*(107). The evidence of the tomb reliefs suggest that the harp was the favourite instrument of the musicians of the Middle Kingdom, and a harp might be placed in the grave, along with the most cherished possession of the deceased \*(108), but pipes were also played \*(109).

Occasionally singers may be shown accompanying themselves on harps \*(110), but it was more usual for singers to be accompanied by someone else. Some reliefs show singers with a hand over one ear, indicating that they were probably checking their pitch \*(111), but it was more usual to portray a vocalist clapping, or clicking the fingers, either to maintain their own rhythm or that of the dancers, whose efforts they were supporting.



regularly translated as butler, and, according to the Wörterbuch, a wdpwyt was a maid-servant who presented wine \*(115). The verb wb3 means to pour out (a drink) \*(116), so the duties of a wb3 and a wb3yt must also have included the serving of wine.

A wb3yt and a wdpwyt were thus both female servants whose duties included the presentation of wine, and may possibly have extended over service at mealtimes, and perhaps to personal service in general, for their employers.

Examples:

Of wdpwyt - Cairo stela 20016 only.

Of wb3yt - Antefokar, pl.XXVI.

Cairo stelae 20022, 20024, 20098, 20119, 20398, 20441 (one of the joint owners), 20516, 20561 and 20592.

British Museum stelae, vol.II, pl.16, and vol.III, pl.15.

Leiden stelae, pl.II, no.3., and pl.XI, no.12.

Rec. de Trav., 1882, vol.III, p.117, no.107.

Westcar Papyrus. When Rwd-ddt sends her maids for barley to brew beer, the title used to describe them is wb3yt \*(117). Later on in the same story, Rwd-ddt expresses great distress at the treachery of one of these maids who had been born and raised in the household, implying a close degree of contact between a wb3yt and her employer.

vii)  , 'h'yt, attendant.


This title only occurs on stelae, and there is no indication as to the duties performed by the holders of this office, but, since it is presumably derived from the verb 'h', which means among other things to stand, to attend on, an 'h'yt would have been a woman whose duties included attendance on her employers.

## Examples:

Cairo stelae 20026, 20476 (see above p. 300) and 20542.

Louvre stelae, G.166, pl.XXIV and G.196, Pl.LIX.

Rec. de Trav., 1882, vol.III, p.115, no.107.

viii)  , '3nt, an Asiatic woman.

The word '3nt denotes a woman from over the Eastern frontier of Egypt, but it also acquired the secondary meaning of an Asiatic servant, and it is the latter translation which is to be applied in the examples quoted below \*(118).

## Examples:

J.E.A., 1961, vol.XLVII, pl.III. The woman is shown grinding corn, which would indicate a lowly position in the household.

Zagreb, ps.18/19, no.6.

Meir, vol.II, pl.V. She walks behind her mistress, carrying a box, so she is presumably a personal attendant.

Cairo stelae 20119, 20158, 20164, 20227, 20549 and 20550.

Vienna stela, p.26, I.11, no.52.

Metropolitan Museum of Art stela no.63.154.

Kahun Papyri, pl.XII, line 10 and pl.XIII, lines 15/18.

Brooklyn Papyrus, Verso, pls.VIII/XIII, lines 1/95.

The first of the two papyri from Kahun is an imyt pr, a document by which a man called Wjh transferred some property from himself to his wife. The property in this case was four Asiatic servants. Wjh had already received these four persons as part of a gift from his brother, so clearly their condition was servile.

The second Kahun document concerns the payment of officials for their

services, and the remuneration consisted of four female Asiatics, two of whom were adult, while the other two were children, both under three years of age.


The relevant section of the Brooklyn Papyrus is a list of 95 lines, some of which are now illegible, giving the names and occupations, line by line, of the servants and their children, of one Egyptian household. Of these servants, seven are male Asiatics, and thirty-two are female Asiatics, of whom seven have one or more children, though the identity of the fathers is not recorded. Most of the adults retain their own names, but the children have all been given Egyptian names, suggesting that they were born there.

In his discussion on this text, Hayes notes that, "... The occupations assigned to the Asiatics are for the most part of a skilled and not particularly onerous nature, while the dirty, backbreaking toil of the fieldhand (ihwty) and gardener (k3ryt) are reserved for the Egyptians." \*(119). The Asiatic servants must, therefore, have been considered as valuable assets, but there is no direct reference as to how they were acquired.

The nature and extent of Egyptian influence and military activity in Syria and Palestine does not come within the scope of this inquiry, though it does have a bearing on the question of the acquisition of servants from that area. One entry in the Brooklyn Papyrus states that, "... there are given my fifteen persons and my prisoners, who are members of my household, to my wife, Snbtisy" \*(120), which suggests that at least a few of the Asiatics could have found their way into Egypt as prisoners of war, but, as yet, there is little evidence to indicate Egyptian military activity over her eastern frontier on a scale large enough to produce numerous

captives for household servants \*(121). Moreover, prisoners of war tend to be used as labourers, whereas, as Hayes noted, most of the Asiatics in the Brooklyn Papyrus at any rate, had skilled occupations.

It would therefore seem reasonable to assume that the majority of such servants either came of their own free will, or as merchandise, recalling the Biblical story of Joseph: "Then there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver and they brought Joseph into Egypt" (Genesis 37:28).

ix)  , hmt, servant, slave.

The concept of slavery, as it is generally understood in the western world, is based on a combination of Roman law, and the institution as it developed in the Southern states of the United States of America in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries A.D., so it is perhaps unwise to use the word slave in the ancient Egyptian context, since it may lead to the assumption of non-existent parallels. However, slave is the most common translation for hm(t), so it is used here, though the evidence concerning the actual status of these people is not always clear \*(122).

Like '3mt and b3kt, hmt was used to denote a woman's status, rather than her profession, and it is difficult to ascertain the range of jobs which may have fallen to their lot, because most of the evidence is drawn from stelae, where they are shown merely carrying food offerings to their masters. The only exception is the stela in the Louvre where the position of the figure, and the accompanying inscription, make it clear that she was a personal maid (see above p.317). More valuable information is to be found on the Brooklyn Papyrus, which lists hairdresser (n3t), gardener



(k3ryt), reciter (p3rt nt r.s) and warper (?) of šsr-cloth (d3 šsr) among the crafts of the hnt.

Examples \*(123):

British Museum stela, vol.II, pl.4.

Cairo stelae 20088, 20098, 20227 20345, 20392, 20427, 20470, 20515, 20535, 20549, 20598 and 20638.

Simpson, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, pl.81, Metropolitan Museum of Art stela 63.154.

Louvre stelae, C.3, pl.V, C.170, pl.XXVIII, C.15 pl.LIV and C.196, pl.LIX.

B.I.F.A.O., 1930, vol.XXX, p.111.

el Arabah, pl.XII, E.312.

Tombs of the Courtiers, pls.XXIII and XXIV.


Carlsberg, A.690.

Žába, Les Maximes de Ptahhotep, p;21, line P 59. The women referred to here have the arduous task of grinding grain.

Brooklyn Papyrus, pls.VIII/XIII, lines 2, 28, 38, 40, 43, 48, 54, 60, 65, 70, 75 and 82.

Kahun Papyrus pl.XXXII, line 5.

Several of the female slaves who are named on the stelae are said to have children, as are some of those listed on the Brooklyn Papyrus, but the fathers are never named, and there is no indication as the marital status of the mothers. There are, however, only two stelae where a case can be made out for identifying the fathers of the children of a hnt with the owners of the stelae (see el Arabah, pl.XII, E.312 and B.I.F.A.O., 1930 vol.XXX, p.111, above on ps.235 and 241 respectively).

The scribe who wrote the Brooklyn Papyrus was careful to differentiate between those servants who were native Egyptians and those who were of Asiatic origin. The women of the former group were designated as hmt, while the women in the latter group were all '3mt. This is not to say that hmt could only be applied to native Egyptians for on a stela in the Musée de Langes \*(124), one of the two hmt is said to be  , hmt.f nt Pwnt, his puntite slave.

After the various military operations in Nubia during the Middle Kingdom, particularly after the campaigns of Senusret I and Senusret III, there must have been numerous Nubian prisoners of war, enslaved by the Egyptians, yet no stela or tomb speaks of a servant as "the Nubian", in the same way that they refer to "the Asiatic" \*(125).

x)  , b3kt, servant.

This would appear to be another general word for servant, and more information is required to establish the exact status of the woman concerned. The b3kt nt hk3, for example, was a woman of good, perhaps even noble birth (see above p. 273), while the b3kt nt pr was an unimportant domestic, who might be summarily dismissed.

#### Examples:

James, The Hekanakhte Papers, pls.4/4A, line 13. The b3kt nt pr was turned out of the house because she had not treated her master's concubine with the right degree of deference.

In the list of those members of the household of Hk3-nht who were entitled to rations, there are two women designated b3kt, and they both seem to be personal attendants of the ladies of the household, because their names follow those of their respective mistresses, and each servant

is specifically said to be bjkt.s (see pls.5/5A, lines 8/11).

Gardiner, the Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage, pl.4, line 12. The author of the Admonitions contrasted the position of bjkt, female servants, to špswt, noble ladies, clearly intending to convey the difference between the lowest and the highest.

Ann. du Serv. 1929, vol.XXIX, p.7, line 8. In the course of an autobiographical inscription on a stela found at Edfu, an official recorded a journey that he made to Kush, and he claims to have brought back both gold and twenty-six bjkt.

Gardiner and Sethe, Egyptians Letters to the Dead, The Cairo Bowl (Cat. Gen.25375), pls.VI/VIA, line 2. The bjkt named in this letter was a servant who had managed to make herself so indispensable to her mistress that, when she fell ill, her employer wrote to her dead husband, bitterly resentful that he had allowed such a calamity to occur, and forecasting the destruction of the household unless a cure was effected.

British Museum stela, vol.I, pl.55. The owner, recording the details of how he established his mortuary cult, says that, as rewards for their services, he gave his mortuary priest (hm k3) and his lector priest (hry-hbt) several commodities, together with a bjk and a bjkt each, which would indicate that these servants were of servile status, since they could be given away with other property.

xi)  , prt, domestic servant.

This title is found in one of the letters of Hk3-nht (see James, The Hekanakhte Papers, pls.6/6A, line 39) in which he admonishes his son not to deprive a woman called Htpt of any companion of hers, whether it is her hairdresser (n3t.s) or her domestic servant (prt.s). The linking of the

titles nšt and pꜣt may indicate that the duties of a pꜣt included personal service to her mistress, rather than general household duties.

## GROUP 7

The servants assigned to Group 6 were either women with some professional training, such as musicians and dancers, or were considered by their masters important enough members of their households to have their names and ranks recorded in their documents, tombs, and on their stelae. Some of the women of Group 7 must also have been highly skilled in their craft, but they did not enjoy any intimate contact with the family that employed them. They performed the heavy domestic labours, which were necessary for the maintenance of a household, but were considered too menial to warrant their names being individually recorded.

Information concerning their duties comes from tomb reliefs and tomb models, and is therefore automatically limited to those aspects of the domestic scene, which were thought to be most important to the owner of the tomb, so there are numerous scenes showing the making of bread and beer, but none showing the scrubbing of floors.

### 1) Cooking and Brewing.

Considering the number of joints of meat which are shown piled up on offering tables, and the numbers of fowl and fish being caught in the marshes, remarkably little space in tomb reliefs is devoted to the actual preparation of these commodities for the table. When such scenes are shown \*(126), all stages, from the catching and slaughtering of the animal, bird or fish, through to the cooking, appear to have been performed by men. However, even though men may have been the "head chefs" in noble households,

in the lower ranks of society women must have done the cooking.

Though the women of a noble household may have been relegated to a position of secondary importance in the cooking of meat, they seem to have played a more active roll in the baking of bread. The initial stages of brewing also involved the baking of bread, so baking and brewing are usually shown together, both in tomb paintings and models, though no one painting or model necessarily records all the processes involved \*(127).

In order to make bread, the grain had first to be pounded from the husks (e.g. Antefoker pl.XI), which was a strenuous task, usually performed by men, but then women replaced them to sieve the grain to remove the husks (e.g. Five Theban Tombs pl.XXXVIII), before grinding it into flour (e.g. Beni Hasan vol.II, pl.VI). The flour may have been sieved again to remove impurities (e.g. Antefokar pl.XI), before water was added and the dough was kneaded (e.g. Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XII), and rolled into shape (e.g. el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.XXIV). Finally the dough was placed into moulds for baking (e.g. Antefokar, pl.XI).

The bread making process was then complete, but if beer was to be brewed, the loaves were only lightly baked. Men then brought water, carried in jars suspended from a yoke \*(128), and it was poured over the bread, which had been crumbled. The mixture was then left to ferment, after which it was passed through a sieve (e.g. Antefokar, pl.XI). Occasionally, someone may be shown pouring the contents of a small jar into the beer (e.g. Antefokar, pl.XI), and if this is part of the brewing process, as would appear likely, then there may have been some additional flavouring ingredient \*(129).

#### ii) Spinning and weaving.

After the cultivation and preparation of food, the production of

cloth must have been the single most important occupation in the ancient Egyptian community. Doubtless all peasant women could spin, and probably many could weave as well, though their cloth would only have been coarse and destined for use within the immediate family, or, at most, for sale in the local market. Women of greater skill might be encouraged to specialize and spend most of their time in the production of high quality cloth for a noble household, or even a temple or the palace, since all these institutions produced their own cloth.

Linen produced in the weaving sheds of a large estate was primarily intended for its own use, as there would be a continual demand for cloth for clothing, bedding, and other domestic purposes, while, in the event of a funeral, large quantities of linen were required for the embalming process, the wrapping of the corpse, and the provision of the grave goods \*(130).

Surplus cloth might be disposed of for profit, or as payment for goods and services. One of the accounts of Hk3-nht concerns twenty bundles of yarn, the balance of some transaction entered into with a woman called S3t-Nb-sh3tw \*(131), while among the account papyri from Kahun, there is an anxious letter from a nbt pr to her master (nb), asking for instructions as to how to deal with certain maidservants (hwt), who were not producing the cloth for the temple. Whether this cloth was for sale, or to be given as a donation, or even a tax, is not disclosed. Clearly, however, the hwt were not independent producers, but were servants, working under the direction of this nbt pr \*(132), which is an interesting sidelight on the authority that could be entrusted to a nbt pr.

The tomb of D3gi \*(133) has scenes illustrating the preparation of

flax with women bruising or cleaning the flax between two sticks, and then teasing out the fibres, while another twists the threads into yarn by rolling them on her thigh. The yarn was then wound into balls for the spinners to use.

Examples of spinning and weaving:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXIX and vol.II, pls.IV and XIII.

el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.XXVI.

Five Theban Tombs, pl.XXXVII.

Mo'alla, p.76, fig.31.

Elephantine, pl.24.

There are many models showing weaving, but the most famous is the one from the tomb of Mkt-R', see Winlock, Models of Daily Life in Ancient Egypt from the tomb of Meket-Re at Thebes, pls.25/27.

Brooklyn Papyrus, pls.VIII/XIII, includes many servants engaged in the production of cloth. Nine individuals are said to be sht h3tyw, weavers of h3tyw-cloth (see lines 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 21, 23, 25 and 61), and one was a sht šsr, a weaver of šsr-cloth. (see line 16). Ten others are said to be d3 \*(134), warper of h3tyw-cloth (see lines 17, 26, 37, 59 and 64) and of šsr-cloth (see lines 7, 22, 47, 65 and 70). All these cloth manufacturers are women, and all but two are said to be Asiatics ('3mt), which suggests that these women had especial skills which made them valuable servants.

iii) Perfume making.

Perfume making is very rarely illustrated in tombs of the Middle Kingdom but one such scene did appear in a tomb at Beni Hasan and was recorded by Cailliaud \*(135), though, unhappily, it was subsequently destroyed. The scene was part of the series concerned with the occupations of the women of

the household, and only two stages in the process were illustrated - the gathering of the flowers, and the crushing of the blossoms, presumably after they had been steeped in oil \*(136). Perfume making is clearly a delicate and skilled occupation which required training, and it cannot have been undertaken by more than a few specialists.


iv) Rope making.

One other skilled craft in which the women of the household played a leading role, was that of rope making. Unfortunately only one very fragmentary relief showing this process has survived from the Middle Kingdom \*(137).

There would have been several other crafts practised on a large estate, such as carpentry, stone masonry and the making of jewellery, but women did not participate in any of these trades.

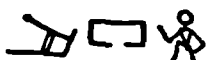
### GROUP 8

The occupations of servants in Groups 5, 6 and 7, however humble, were all directly concerned with the actual running of a household and catering for its needs, but those of Group 8 were not members of a noble household, though some of them may have worked in the gardens and outhouses of an estate.


1)  , k3ryt, gardener.

Examples:

Brooklyn Papyrus, pl.IX, lines 38 and 43. These two female gardeners were both Egyptians, and are both said to be a hmt,

ii)  3n', magazine employee.




Examples: The Brooklyn Papyrus lists four women engaged in this work, pls.X/XII, lines 45, 56, 62 and 69. Three of these women are Asiatics, but the name and origin of the fourth has been destroyed, though there can be no doubt of her sex because the determinative  is still legible. There is no indication as to the nature of their duties.

iii) , tt k3t, labourer.

The Brooklyn Papyrus, pl.X, line 35, names one '3at who bears this title but does not elaborate as to the nature of her work.

iv) Field labourers \*(138).

Every decorated tomb contains scenes depicting the agricultural activities of the owner's estates and this information can be supplemented by reference to the tomb models of the early Middle Kingdom, but in such paintings, reliefs and models, the numerous men and women portrayed at their labours remain anonymous, and no details are supplied as to their status or their family relationships.

In the absence of any pharaonic law code, which might give a clue to the meaning of certain terms, it is impossible satisfactorily to determine how many, if any, peasants enjoyed a measure of independence, either as small landowners in their own right or as free labourers whose services were for hire, and how many were bound to the land, either as actual slaves, or in what might be described as a form of serfdom. Tomb scenes and models, portraying as they do noblemen and their officials closely supervising the activities of the peasants, give the impression that these men and women were not free agents, and certain texts of the Middle Kingdom tend to confirm this impression because they speak of , mrt and

, ratt, being passed on to new masters, along with

other possessions such as land and cattle \*(139). However, this evidence is drawn from the tombs of the aristocracy and the documents of the middle and upper classes, so the picture may be incomplete.

While some, even the majority, of agricultural workers may have been bound to the land to some degree as yet not fully appreciated, others may have enjoyed a greater measure of independence and had to face its attendant risks. The loquacious resident of the Wâdi Natrûn, whose misadventures supplied the plot of one of the most popular of Middle Kingdom stories, was described as a shty, peasant \*(140), but, when he wished to exchange rushes, salt, pelts, and other local products for food, he gathered his wares together, loaded them on to his donkeys, and set off, apparently needing no master's permission to travel, as he would have done had he been living in a state of serfdom. The author of Papyrus Anastasi V \*(144), which is admittedly later than the other material under consideration here, gives an elaborate account of the unhappy lot of the ihwty (or 'hwty'), who appears to have been a small independent farmer, liable to be seized for servitude if he failed to meet the demands of the tax-gatherers, which would hardly have happened if the peasant was actually owned by a nobleman or temple.

According to tomb paintings and models, the heavy work of ploughing, sowing and reaping was performed by men, with women doing the gleaning (e.g. Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXIX and Antefokar, pl.III), and winnowing (e.g. Antefokar, pl.III). It must be remembered, however, that tomb relief were very selective, only illustrating certain key episodes of the agricultural cycle, which served to symbolize the whole. The arduous and continuous tasks of weeding and irrigation were not recorded, and women were probably engaged in one, if not both of these labours. Moreover,

there is no reason to suppose that women could not be employed in all stages of the cycle if the need arose. One scribe, for example, when recalling the days of his mis-spent youth as an idle student, admitted that, while he was neglecting his studies, his father, mother, brothers and sisters were all working in the fields \*(142).

The digging and repairing of irrigation canals was probably another occasion when women would be expected to labour alongside men, even if their participation was restricted to carrying the earth away, rather than doing the actual digging. Certainly, from the Old Kingdom onwards, both sexes were apparently expected to perform some kind of corvée for the central government, and most people seem to have been liable for this service, though doubtless the influential and wealthy would avoid it by providing substitutes just as they provided themselves with substitutes, in the form of ahwabtis, in order to avoid these tasks in the Hereafter. This forced labour was unpopular, to judge from the risks run by such people as Ttī, the daughter of S3-īnhr, in their attempts to evade the service. This unfortunate woman was among the defaulters being sought by the officials of the Great Prison, (hnrt wrt) of Thebes, for having absconded before the completion of their period of compulsory labour \*(143).

To judge from the various tomb models \*(144), the care of beef cattle was the prerogative of men, and the reliefs on the sarcophagi of 'jāyt and K3wīt, and the paintings in the tomb of Kmsīt, show men milking cows \*(145), but a rare model of a cow being milked has a woman in the role of milkmaid \*(146).

The author of the Satire of Trades had nothing but contempt for farming

and painted a sorry picture of the lot of the peasant, who endured months of back-breaking toil, at the mercy of every conceivable predator - insect, bird, beast and human, only to end up being beaten for non-payment of taxes, while his family were led away in fetters \*(147). The unhappy climax of this story is reflected in a scene in a tomb at Beni Hasan, which shows the counting of oxen and asses. One man, presumably a tax defaulter, is being beaten and others are awaiting the same fate, while three women, one of them with a baby in her arms, another an old woman leaning on a stick, are also receiving some rough handling from the officials of the estate \*(148).

#### GROUP 9

In the tombs and on the stelae of the Middle Kingdom, the offspring of the owner were usually depicted as fully grown adults. Occasionally children of more tender years were represented, but then an artistic convention, common to many civilisations, decreed that they were to be shown as adults in miniature. Perhaps as a concession to his youth, a small boy might be shown with a light brown skin \*(149), rather than the rich red/brown of the adult male, but this was not a universal practice, and elsewhere, even a babe in arms might be shown with the dark-coloured skin reserved for the male \*(150).

Young children of both sexes were shown naked \*(151), and it was evidently the custom to allow them to dispense with clothing in the summer, and when they were engaged in any energetic pursuit \*(152), and young serving girls, at least during the New Kingdom, regularly appeared naked or nearly so; at banquets \*(153).

As with adults, the number of poses in which children of the upper classes were depicted were limited. Usually they were shown simply standing

or sitting in the presence of their parents, sometimes smelling a lotus, or very occasionally carrying some food offering. In tombs there were a few more variations, and a child might be shown with its parents on an outing in the marshes \*(154), or even playing ball and performing the energetic hpgt dance \*(155).

It may confidently be assumed that the children of peasants and artisans had to begin work at an early age, the boys learning their fathers' skills, and the girls caring for their younger brothers and sisters \*(156) and being instructed by their mothers in cookery and domestic management. At such critical times as ploughing and harvest, all members of a peasant family would be expected to be in the fields, making some contribution to the general effort \*(157).

Though there are no extant Middle Kingdom examples, scenes in New Kingdom tombs show that girls entered troupes of professional mourners while they were still very young \*(158), and others began their apprenticeship as singers and dancers at an equally early age \*(159). Adolescent girls could also find employment in large households as serving girls \*(160).


The children of the nobility would naturally escape the heavy labour, which was the inevitable lot of a peasant child, but besides the demands of their formal education, they were expected to take an active role in the religious life of the community. Scenes in tombs of New Kingdom date show children of both sexes worshipping alongside the adult members of their families \*(161), and Tuthmosis III claimed to have served in the temple of Amun while he was still a child \*(162). Nor is this development peculiar to the New Kingdom, for a scene in a Theban tomb dated to the reign of Senusret I shows three priests of Hathor, one of whom is a small, naked

boy \*(163). All three wear mnit-necklaces and carry a species of clappers. Besides this, there is the letter addressed to a dead man by his "sister" (ant), warning him that her daughter, who is young enough to be unwed and in need of a protector, was being cheated of her inheritance \*(164), though she was the one making the funeral offerings to the dead man, so at least some participation in funeral rituals must have been possible for young women, even though they were not allowed to officiate as sn-priest at the actual funeral (see above ps.293 /294 ).

Religious responses and rituals may be learned by heart, so the participation of women and children in temple and other services is not in itself proof of literacy. All the available details concerning formal education refer to schools for boys, not girls, but even so, a few tentative deductions can be made for the education of girls \*(165).

In the absence of schools \*(166), instructions for girls, such as was available, must have been received at home, though possibly some girls of good family may have been raised and educated at court, as companions to the princesses, in the same way as the boys were brought up with the sons of the king.

It may be assumed that music, dancing, and domestic management probably figured among a young woman's accomplishments, but it is difficult to ascertain how many of them were taught to read and write, or to what degree of proficiency. Women of the royal family must have been well-educated \*(167), and there is evidence (see below, Section IV) to show that, when necessary, women could undertake the running of estates and participate in business affairs, which would argue for a certain minimal degree of education, even allowing for the use of professional scribes.

One specific Middle Kingdom reference concerning literacy among women is to be found in Papyrus Boulaq 18 \*(168), where, among the personnel of the royal household, there is a  sāt r.s, literally "the scribe of her (i.e. her mistress's) mouth". Unless this title is to be interpreted as an elaborate description of a beautician, then there was in the royal household, presumably in the service of the Great Royal Wife, a female scribe who recorded the words of her employer.

The office of female scribe, if such it is, must have been rare, but its very existence argues for a degree of literacy among Egyptian women, and not necessarily those of the highest rank because the sāt r.s was listed along with a singer and a nurse.

The reciter (prt nt pr.s), whose name occurs among the servants in the Brooklyn Papyrus (see above p.318) may have recited material learned by rote, rather than read material from scrolls, but the presence of women in certain administrative positions within large households does suggest that the rudiments of education were available to women, and may have even extended to the higher domestics.

There is no specific statement relating to the age of legal maturity in ancient Egypt. Certain biographies of noblemen of the Old and Middle Kingdoms \*(169) refer to the occasion when they "tied the fillet" (ts mdh)\*(170), which was clearly an event of great significance in their lives, perhaps because it formally marked the end of boyhood, but at present there is no information as to whether there was a comparable ceremony in the lives of girls to mark their transition to womanhood.

The Insinger Papyrus speaks of a man passing ten years as an ignorant child, and a further ten years being instructed and coming to an understand-

ing of life \*(171), which would indicate that twenty was, for a man at any rate, considered the age of full maturity.

Marriages were probably contracted at a relatively early age \*(172). The sages recommended marriage while one was still young \*(173), and one quoted twenty as the ideal age \*(174), thus adding importance to the statement in the Insinger Papyrus referred to above. However, though twenty may have been considered the best age for a young nobleman to marry, among the peasants the age is likely to have been rather lower, and in all classes it may be assumed that the brides would be slightly younger than their bridegrooms \*(175).

Though an early marriage may have been regarded as desirable for a girl, there is some reason to suppose that child marriages as such were not encouraged, even though the betrothal could take place at an early age. Hr-wd3, for example, was refused the hand of Nyt-m-h3t by her father, on the grounds that "her time has not yet come" \*(176). That took place in year 14 of Psamtik I, yet in year 15 the couple were married with the father's blessing. This can surely only mean that in year 14, the girl had not begun menstruation but that the event occurred during the next twelve months.

A girl's future might be settled at a very early age, even though marriage might have to wait until full physical maturity. When the coffin of T3-M3yt was opened \*(177), it was found to contain the body of a child of about five years of age. The five women buried with her were all entitled hkrt nsw w'tt hnt Hthr, and some at least (see above p.276) were said to be wives of Nebhepetre Mentuhetep, but the coffin of T3-M3yt bore no titles \*(178). Had she been the daughter of Nebhepetre there would surely have been some mention of this on the coffin, so, if she were not his daughter, there is a strong possibility that she had entered the royal household, perhaps as



a prospective secondary wife or concubine, but had died before she was old enough either to fulfill this destiny, or to play any part in public life that would have warranted the assumption of an official title.

The existence of a considerable body of love poetry \*(179) suggests that at least some young people attempted to pursue their own preferences, but most marriages were probably arranged by the parents or guardians of the contracting parties, or perhaps between the father of the girl and the prospective bridegroom. Certainly before the end of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, all documents dealing with the arrangement of marriages speak of a father as giving his daughter in marriage \*(180), or at least as having accepted the suitor \*(181), while the man himself took the girl as wife \*(182). In the earliest surviving marriage contracts, it is specifically stated that the man wnt to the house of the father of the woman he wished to marry, in order to make an 'n hmt', a "writing concerning the wife", i.e. a settlement, for her \*(183), but at sometime in the late Twenty-sixth Dynasty, this formula was abandoned \*(184) in favour of a direct approach to the bride with the settlement worded "I have made you my wife" \*(185). Thus the agreement was between the woman and her husband, rather than between her father and her husband, but there is no indication that this change of formula signalled a greater freedom of personal choice of marriage partner for the woman. In the eyes of the parents, good financial prospects must always have played an important role in determining their choice of a spouse for their offspring of both sexes. The sage 'nh-ššnk' warned his readers to exercise great care in the choice of a son-in-law, recommending them in one passage to choose a gold dealer, and in another to choose a prudent man \*(186). From the point of view of the prospective son-in-law, it was prudent to marry into an

influential family that could protect him in times of hardship or civil disturbance \*(187).

The early documents make no mention of any payment being made by the would-be bridegroom to the girl's father that can be construed as a bride price, but the early marriage contracts do refer to the šp n šwt, which was a payment made, at first to the bride on marriage, then later only in the event of a divorce \*(188). Pestman considered that in the šp we are confronted with "a rudiment of the sum of money or the property that the man has in earlier times to give to the father of the girl in order to marry her" \*(189), but, though it may be considered a likely enough practice, as yet there is no evidence of the payment of a bride-price, prior to the contracts mentioning the šp.

Though the actual proposal of marriage may have come from the suitor, rather than his parents, if he were a young man, there is little doubt that his parents had strongly attempted to influence, if not actually dictate, his choice. "Do not allow your son to take a wife of his own choice, so that he does not bring all to nought that you have achieved", was the warning \*(190), and to allow your son freedom of choice, was to risk him marrying a girl from another village and being persuaded to move away from his parents \*(191).

Obedience was expected of children, not only in the choice of spouse, but in every aspect of life. It was the vizier Pth-htp who most fervently exalted the virtue of obedience \*(192), even recommending that a disobedient, and therefore inevitably worthless son, should be disinherited \*(193). The very fact that Pth-htp felt the need to give such advice may be taken as proof that some young Egyptians must have failed to live up to his ideal

picture of docile obedience. Indeed, in one passage, he even offered childless men and women consolation on the grounds that children brought grief and the loss of tranquility \*(194).

The wisdom literature was written by men, mainly for the edification of their sons, so the emphasis throughout is on the father/son relationship, but most sages devoted some space to the reverence due to a mother, even though it might only take the form of a pious generalisation such as "Serve your father and mother that you may go and prosper" \*(195). Others made more positive statements warning those who treated their mothers unkindly that they would be considered despicable objects by the rest of the community \*(196), while the author of the Insinger Papyrus warned that wrong-doing would bring down the dire penalty of a mother's curse on the head of the sinner \*(197).

The most comprehensive statement concerning the debt a man owed his mother is to be found in the writings of the sage Ḥnvy, who recommended the reader to recall how he had spent nine months as a grievous burden in his mother's womb; how she had fed him and attended to his every need when he was a helpless baby, and how she had had him educated as a child, tending him with loving care every day \*(198). It was 'nh-šānk, however, who most succinctly summed up the depth of the bond between a mother and her son when he advised his readers, "Do not laugh at your son in the presence of his mother lest you learn the unimportance of his father" \*(199).

#### SECTION IV - THE LEGAL POSITION OF WOMEN.

It would be idle to pretend that the Egyptian state offered women anything approaching equality of opportunity with men, for the kingship was a masculine prerogative, and the whole of the administration was run by men. On the other hand, it would be incorrect to assume that women were therefore considered to be totally inferior beings, with few, if any rights, and no role to play in society.

The number of surviving legal documents of the Middle Kingdom is unfortunately small, and by no means all of them directly concern women, so it is impossible to make any valid assessment of the status of women, based on sources of that era alone. However, to draw on material from other epochs, necessitates the exercise of great caution, since, even in so conservative society as Egypt, laws and customs must have evolved during the three thousand or so years of its recorded, independent history. The material has therefore been arranged in chronological order, and the first time each document is quoted, its date will be given.

All the documents used in the following survey have already been published, and many have been quoted in general commentaries on ancient Egyptian law. The aim here, therefore, has been to re-examine and re-appraise the material, to extract as much information as possible concerning the nature and extent of the legal entity and independence of Egyptian women only.

To achieve this, relevant portions of documents from various periods have been grouped together under headings, each one representing a fundamental legal right or obligation. Because the material has been drawn from all periods of Pharaonic history, some shifts in emphasis and changes in power

can be detected, but the basic picture remains remarkably consistent.

Dissecting the evidence in this way necessitates quoting some documents under several different headings. This means that some repetition is unavoidable, but it has been kept to the basic minimum. Other sources, chiefly tomb and stela biographies and literary texts, have been used to supplement and confirm the legal texts wherever possible. As in Section III, the instructions of the sages are a most valuable source of information, since they reflect the attitudes of the various authors to women and their place in society.

The picture that emerges from these combined sources suggests that, throughout pharaonic history, free Egyptian women, provided that they were of good character, were accorded a considerable degree of respect and enjoyed a favourable legal status. It will be seen that they could inherit, administer, and dispose of property, enter into business agreements, and play a role in the religious life of the country. In marriage, the economic rights of a woman were safeguarded, and her legal rights over her children, were respected. In short, though their status cannot be compared to that of a woman of the modern, Western world, compared with many other civilisations, the Egyptian woman commanded an enviable legal and social position.

#### Rights of Inheritance.

At the climax of the Osiride mythological cycle, Horus is triumphantly installed on the throne of his father, Osiris. For the Egyptians, this may be said to represent the ideal - the elevation of a good and dutiful son to the dignities of his father. In accordance with this divine precedent, it was customary for the crown to pass to the eldest surviving son of the

Pharaoh and his Great Royal Wife. Similarly, from their establishment in the Old Kingdom down to their disappearance during the reign of Senuaset III, it was customary for the lands of the nomarchs to pass from father to son. The same must have been true of most other estates and farms, and, throughout pharaonic history, men endeavoured, with varying degrees of success, to pass their administrative and priestly offices, together with their personal wealth, on to their sons.

This is not to suggest that the theory of primogeniture was ever recognised by the Egyptians as the sole legal principle governing inheritance of land, or any other commodity. Though there were obvious political, economic and administrative advantages to be gained from passing on a group of important offices, or certain large units of land, intact, to one legatee, enough evidence has survived to show that men were prepared to divide up their property and the income of their offices, between their children, boys and girls, either in equal portions, or as seemed best to them <sup>(1)</sup>.

Though a son was preferred to a daughter as the heir of an estate, land was not entailed to the male line, because there are cases where it can be shown that, when a man died without a son, his lands, even a whole nome, were passed to a daughter or a sister, and not to a brother or nephew, as would have happened had the property been entailed to the male line.

The following selection of material has been drawn from actual wills, from deeds of gift, court cases, and statements from funeral monuments, and is concerned with the disposal of land, offices, and goods. Enough examples of widely differing date exist to prove that, certainly from the Third Dynasty onwards, women could inherit land, goods, and the income from offices

even though they might not perform the duties of that office in person.

Examples:

1) The will of Mṭn \*(2) (Reign of Sneferu).

Mṭn made out his will in favour of his children (msw) and, since he is known to have had one son only, the implication must be that he also had at least one or more daughters, who were to share in the inheritance.

Mṭn himself had inherited some of his land from his father, but he makes no reference to any moveables. Perhaps it was taken for granted that these were included with the land, but it is possible that they may have formed a separate legacy for the widow.

2) The will of N-kṣw-R' \*(3) (Dynasty IV).

In his will, this son of Khufu left several estates to each of his sons and his daughter, besides providing for his wife and for his own mortuary cult.

3) The will of Tnti \*(4) (Dynasty IV).

The property of Tnti was equally divided, one half going to his wife, the other to his brother. The brother was a kṣ-priest and was expected to make ritual offerings for his deceased relative himself, but the widow was expected to maintain the services of four kṣ-priests from her share.

4) A Funeral Endowment \*(5) (Reign of Khafra).

Among the clauses of this document is one that specifically states that neither, brothers, sisters, daughters, children, nor several other categories of relatives and dependants, might use the land in question, for anything but the maintenance of the funeral cult of the deceased. The implication of this statement is that, without these stipulations, the aforesaid females would have had as legitimate a claim to the property as any of the male relatives enumerated.

5) The will of Ni-k3-'nh \*(6) (Dynasty V).

Ni-k3-'nh made a will dividing his lands and priestly offices between his wife and children, thirteen persons in all, who were to benefit on equal terms. Each beneficiary had to serve one month a year as priest of Hathor and one month as a k3-priest. Presumably, if the women were considered ineligible to perform these services in person, they could hire the services of a man to act for them, but there is no mention of this in the document.

6) The will of Idw \*(7) (Dynasty VI).

Idw bequeathed all his property to his wife, in recognition of the honour in which he held her.

7) Cairo stela 20543 (First Intermediate Period)

This stela belonged to a steward iky-r pr named Hnm(w)-rdi, who was in the service of a King's Daughter and King's Wife (s3t nsw hnt nsw) called Nfrw-k3yt. Hnm(w)-rdi claimed that his mistress had been the heiress of her mother (line 9) and, perhaps by virtue of this inheritance, referred to her as "foremost" or "chief" (h3t) of the people from Elephantine, north to the Aphroditopolite nome (line 10), though he does not make it clear whether or not she actually inherited that particular area from her mother.

8) Heiresses of the Middle Kingdom.

There are several occasions during the Middle Kingdom when it can be shown that a woman inherited, not simply great wealth, but the governorship of an administrative area.

(a) The first example actually belongs to the Sixth Dynasty, but it has been included here as an interesting precedent. The nomes of T3-wr and Dw-ft were united when Tb1 of T3-wr married Hm(t)-R' of Dw-ft (see pl.II), and the united inheritance was passed on to their son and grandson.



(b) Amongst the female members of the family of the rulers of Beni Hasan (see pl.III), three inherited actual districts:

- i) When Nht the first died without issue, one of his princedoms passed through his sister, Bjkt, to become the property of her son, Hnm(w)-htp the second.
- ii) Hty, the wife of Hnm(w)-htp the second, was the daughter and heiress of the ruler of the Jackal nome, and this nome was eventually granted to her son.
- iii) An unnamed daughter of Hnm(w)-htp and Hty was appointed as ruler of a city.

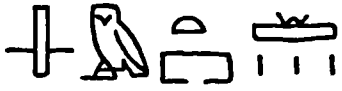
(c) The princedom of Siut passed from one ruler to his daughter and her son.

(d) On the death of the childless ruler Snbi of Meir, his dignities passed to the descendants of his sister Mrsi (see pl.V).

(e) Sj-Rnpwt the second of Elephantine claimed his inheritance as the son of Stt-htp, who was the daughter of the first Sj-Rnpwt (see pl.VI).

The question of whether these women actually administered their lands will be discussed later (see below p.359).

9) The imy pr of Mry \*(8) (c. Reign of Amenemhet III).

This document records the details of a deed gift made by a man called Mry in favour of his son. To make this bequest, Mry had specifically to annul a previous , imy pr, which he had made in favour of his wife, Nbt-nm-nswt. It is not known whether Nbt-nm-nswt had agreed to the advancement of her son at her own expense, or whether her death or disgrace had necessitated the new arrangement.

- 10) The lmyt pr of W3h \*(9) (Year 2, Amenemhet IV).

This records the transference of some property which W3h had inherited from his brother, to his wife.



- 11) The Brooklyn Papyrus \*(10) (Dynasty XIII).

Verse text B records the transference of property by a man to his second wife, for her maintenance and that of her children. The property in question consisted of slaves. "... there are given my fifteen persons, (and) my prisoners, who are members of my household, to my wife, Senebtisy, in addition to my 60 whom I gave to her (on) the fir(st) occasion. Lo, I have given to (this, my wife) a deed of gift ...." \*(11).

- 12) The marriage of a former slave \*(12) (Reign of Tuthmosis III).

On the marriage of his niece to his former slave, a dignitary called S3-B3att, who appears to have promoted the match, settled property on the girl and an office on the prospective bridegroom.

- 13) The inscription of Ms \*(13) (Reign of Ramesses II).

In line N.2 of this inscription, Ms claimed that a , , ps3t, division of property, had been made for his grandmother, Wnr, and her brothers and sisters, by which all seem to have acquired an interest in the property.

- 14) The will of N1wt-nht1 \*(14) (Reign of Ramesses V).

The 'nht nt n1wt N1wt-nht1' was the mother of eight children. Under the provisions of her will, three of her sons and two of her daughters were to benefit, but the remaining son and two daughters were specifically excluded, on the grounds that they had behaved badly towards their mother.

N1wt-nht1 enumerated her possessions, which included lands, buildings and actual objects, some of which she herself had inherited from her two husbands and her father.

15) The adoption of N3-nfr \*(15) (Reign of Ramesses II).

The document relates the history of the family of N3-nfr, also called Rn-nfr, who had apparently been adopted by her own husband. On his death, he left his property to N3-nfr, specifically excluding his brothers and sisters, who might otherwise have had a share in the inheritance. N3-nfr in turn made a will, dividing the property equally between her own adopted sons and daughters.

16) A marriage settlement \*(16) (Dynasty XX).

This document concerned the second marriage of a priest called Imn-h'iw, and the property settlement he made for his new wife. A statement was made before the vizier concerning the agreement, and during his summing up, the vizier made the following observation: "Even if it had not been his wife, but a Syrian or a Nubian whom he loved and to whom he gave his property, (who) should make void what he did?" \*(17).

Naturally most women inherited property from their families, but clearly they were also able to obtain legacies from outside the family circle, provided that there was a legally constituted document to establish the claim.

17) The sale of some inherited property \*(18) (First Century B.C.)

This document concerns the sale of a house, a mill, and some granaries, which several men and women had inherited from their mother.

The above examples are a representative selection of the available evidence and, though they vary greatly in date, there is no conflict between them. It seems that, throughout the Pharaonic Period, a woman could receive endowments and inherit property, in lands, goods, and offices, or the income therefrom, both from her family, and from sources outside the family. A testator might choose to leave more to his or her son, but there does not

appear to have been any law prohibiting a girl from inheriting an equal share with her brother, if that was what her parent wished, and in the absence of a son, a daughter could inherit everything.

### The Right to make a will.

Regrettably few wills made by women have survived, but there is enough evidence to show that, from the early Old Kingdom onwards, women were free to dispose of their own property as they thought best. Naturally most women chose to make their children their beneficiaries, but this was not compulsory, and the decision as to the percentage each legatee received was left to the discretion of the testatrix, even if this involved the disinheriting of some of the family.

Examples:

#### 1) The will of Mtn.

In the course of listing his assets, Mtn made reference to certain lands which he had inherited from his mother. She had effected the transference by means of an imy pr, made for her children (msw), which must have set out how much each was to receive.

#### 2) The will of Tnti.

The land which a woman called Bbi inherited, she later left to her son, Tnti.

#### 3) The imy pr of Wjh.

Wjh made an imy pr in favour of his wife, but her rights over the legacy were limited by the proviso that:

 rdi.s n mry.s nb n n3y.s n (?)

hrdw ms.s n.i, she shall give it to any she pleases of her children she has

born as \*(19).

Thus the woman had a life interest in the property, which happened to be four Asiatics, but her children had to be her beneficiaries, though which ones, and in what proportion was left to her discretion.

4) The Brooklyn Papyrus, verse text B.

A woman challenged the settlement that her father was making for his second wife, on the grounds that some of the goods involved belonged to her. Her father countered the claim with the statement that the property was his, inherited from his mother \*(20).

5) The will of Niwt-nhtj.

Drawn up by a professional scribe, this will took the form of a declaration before a court comprised of the men who worked on the royal tomb. Under this will, Niwt-nhtj disinherited three of her eight children, on the grounds that they had failed to care for her in her old age. She could not prevent any of her offspring from receiving their share in the two-thirds of the property which had formed her marriage fund with their father, but she could and did prevent them from a share of both the one-third of the marriage fund that had come to her, and of those possessions which had been left her by her first husband and her father.

Apart from the obviously interesting clause concerning the legal disinheritance of certain of her children, this document is extremely important because it shows quite clearly that, even after many years of marriage, the private property of this woman, which she had inherited from a previous husband and from her father, had in no way become absorbed into that jointly held amount of property which formed her second marriage settlement.

6) The adoption of Nj-nfr.

This document records the history of a series of marriages and

adoptions within the family of N3-nfr. N3-nfr herself had been adopted by her husband and made his sole heir, to the exclusion of his brothers and sisters, and in her turn, N3-nfr had adopted a man and two women who were the offspring of a slave (hmt), previously purchased by her husband. On their adoption these three were given their freedom \*(21), and one of the women married the younger brother of N3-nfr. He too was then adopted by N3-nfr, and the four adopted children were made her heirs, apparently on equal terms, regardless of sex.

#### 7) The sale of inherited property.

This transaction concerned the sale of lands and buildings, which the owners had acquired under the will of their mother. Part of this property had been settled on the mother by her husband at the time of their marriage, but, on her death, it went straight to her children, so there was no right of reversal to the widower.

The evidence is thus available to show that, from the Third Dynasty onwards, women could make wills, disposing of their possessions as they saw fit, though occasionally the choice of heir might be limited, if the testatrix had herself acquired the property on condition that it would eventually pass to another named party. Incidentally, it has also been shown that, apart from the jointly held marriage fund (see below p.388), a woman could acquire and own property, which preserved its separate identity.

#### The appointment of a male guardian.

In a patrilineal society, women are always under the legal tutelage of their nearest surviving male relative, but such conditions cannot be shown to

have existed in Egypt. Indeed, evidence for widows and orphans passing under the official guardianship of male relatives or their nominees is so rare, that there can be no question of the automatic appointment of such guardians, though there are cases where it can be shown that an elder brother assumed responsibility for his siblings on the death of their parents \*(22).

Regrettably, this must not be taken to mean that the Egyptian social conscience had developed to the point where none but a few arrant rogues would attempt to profit at the expense of a widow and her children, for it may be deduced from tomb biographies and from wisdom literature that these unfortunates were often in great hardship. It was common practice for a tomb biography to laud the goodness of the deceased official by recording that he had given succour to the widows and orphans under his jurisdiction \*(23), and the sage Ṭm-n-Ṭpjt urged his readers not only to refrain from encroaching on the boundaries of the widow \*(24), but also to avoid recognising her if she were seen trespassing in a field \*(25). Even the Pharaoh Merikare had been instructed by his father to "Do justice that thou mayest endure upon earth. Calm the weeper. Oppress not the widow. Expel no man from the possessions of his father" \*(26).

There are cases, several of which are quoted below, that record the successes of women who, though deprived of male support for some reason, nevertheless not only managed to administer<sup>i</sup> their property, but also successfully fought their own legal battles. However, the vulnerability of the widow and the orphan cannot be denied, and clearly if a man thought his wife lacked the intelligence or the character to order her life successfully, or if it was a time of civil unrest, then he would be wise to make some

special provision for her welfare, in the event of his death. Indeed, no matter how capable the woman, it would be of benefit to a widow and her children if some man, preferably one in a position of authority, could be persuaded to take an interest in their welfare. But in the struggle for survival, a great deal would depend on the wealth of the widow. Since the economy of ancient Egypt was not based on money, but on the exchange of goods and services, the widow who had no skills outside housewifery was very vulnerable. It would not matter so much if she were wealthy enough to employ others to work for her, but the widow of a poor peasant or craftsman, left with small children to till fields or perform a craft, tasks for which they had neither the physical strength nor the practical skill, was hardly likely to be in a position to employ someone to do the work for her, at a rate that would support both his family and hers. In most cases such a woman could turn to her family for help \*(27), but she who, for whatever reason, had no family to help her, and no guardian to act in her interests, might live in great hardship until her eldest son was old enough to replace the breadwinner. Such families would be the natural recipients of the much-vaunted charity of the local officials.

#### Examples:

##### 1) The Hu Bowl \*(28) (First Intermediate Period).

The text on this bowl is a complaint in the form of a letter, addressed to a woman to her dead "brother" (sn). Her grievance was that her daughter was being deprived of her rightful share in the dead man's estate, even though it was the girl who was making funeral offerings to the dead man.

This certainly could be a case of a dishonest guardian cheating a girl of her rightful inheritance, but the text nowhere actually refers to guardianship, and the offender could quite well be robbing the girl without



being her trustee. It may, for example, have been a condition of the inheritance that the heirs were to undertake the maintenance of the funeral cult, and that only the girl was fulfilling her bargain, but was still not getting her allotted share of the property.

2) The Cairo text on linen \*(29) (First Intermediate Period).

This letter is an appeal for help to a dead man from his wife \*(30). She recalls that, when her husband was on his death-bed, he appealed to the representative of one Bhs-ti for protection for his wife and child. That they stood in some need of assistance was confirmed by events, for they were subsequently deprived of their inheritance, their guardian having neglected his trust.

This is thus an undoubted case of the appointment of a guardian, but it was not an automatic appointment for the dying man specifically solicited the support of Bhs-ti.

3) The will of Wsr \*(31) (First Intermediate Period).

A man called Wsr made a will leaving property to one Sbk-htp, on the condition that he was to take care of the wife and children of Wsr. Sbk-htp betrayed his trust in some way because, on reaching maturity, ṯjw, the eldest son of Wsr brought an action against Sbk-htp.

4) The ṯmyt pr of Wjh.

When Wjh made the ṯmyt pr in favour of his wife, he also made arrangements as to where he should be buried and where his wife should live, in the event of his pre-deceasing her. The document concluded that, should he be the first to die, the ṯdnw, deputy, named Gb was to act as my n hnw, guardian, for his son \*(32).

# 5) Marriage contracts of the Late Period \*(33).

Although these contracts usually make fairly comprehensive provisions for the maintenance of the wife, should she be widowed, guardians are never referred to.

## Women's rights to administer their own and their children's property.

It has been established that women could inherit property from any source, provided the correct documents had been drawn up, and that, though married, they could maintain the separate identity of their possessions, rather than letting them become absorbed in their husbands' estates. Evidence will now be presented to show that, when necessary, women could administer their estates, conduct business transactions arising therefrom, and even direct the affairs of an entire district, but the circumstances under which they assumed such responsibilities requires clarification.

It would be unwise to quote the actions of the Egyptian royal families as evidence of any social or legal practice or institution because, as has been indicated, their behaviour patterns are not automatically paralleled by the rest of society. It is interesting to note, however, that, though the evidence for earlier periods is lacking \*(34), by the Eighteenth Dynasty at any rate, the early demise of a Pharaoh led, on more than one occasion, to the assumption of powers of regency by his widow \*(35).

### Examples:

#### 1) Hk3-nht and S3t-nb-shtw \*(36) (Dynasty XI).

Amongst the correspondence of Hk3-nht was an account dealing with a business transaction, for which the balance of 20 bundles of yarn, was still

outstanding. One of the contracting parties was a woman called S3t-nb-shtw, who appears to have been conducting the business affairs of her farm.

2) Hereditary heiresses among the provincial nobility.

The administration of estates and the government of nomes was undoubtedly considered the work for a man, rather than a woman. All tomb models and paintings show men supervising the activities of their estates \*(37), and all posts dealing with the administration of royal and temple lands were filled by men, but this does not mean that women were judged incapable of directing affairs if the need arose.

The most common of all women's titles during the Middle Kingdom, nbt pr, lady of the house, clearly means one who directs the affairs of a household. Thus nbt pr, used as a synonym for wife, underlines the notion that the wife was expected to concern herself with domestic matters, while her husband was to care for his land, office, or craft. But, while not denying the general truth of this proposition, it must also be admitted that no woman raised on a farm or an estate, was likely to remain in total ignorance as to the running of such a unit, and the advice of a mature woman, with years of practical experience behind her, might prove invaluable to her husband or son. Moreover, if, as would seem to be the case, a woman's personal possessions, even after marriage, were respected as a separate entity, then presumably she must have had some right, at least to be consulted, over their management, even though in practice she may have been content to allow the burden of responsibility to fall entirely on her husband's shoulders.

There are seven examples, one of Old Kingdom date, the rest from the Middle Kingdom, where it can be shown that women were the heiresses of vast estates and administrative districts on the extinction of the male line,

but, most unfortunately, there is little evidence to indicate the extent of their control over their possessions.

(a) Hm(t)-R' of Deir el Gebrawi \*(38) (Dynasty VI).

Hm(t)-R' had three brothers, one of whom at least married and had two sons, and he became Great Chief (hry tp '3) of the Dw-ft, the Twelfth Nome of Upper Egypt, on the death of his father. However, all the brothers and nephews of Hm(t)-R' must have died at an early age, because her husband, Ibi, the Great Chief of the Tj-wr, the Eighth Nome of Upper Egypt, became the next nomarch of Dw-ft and the two nomes remained united for at least two more generations.

Information concerning Hm(t)-R' comes from her husband's tomb (no.8 at Deir el Gebrawi), where she is entitled ṛḥt nsw ṣpst nsw ḥmt ntr Hthr ḥkrt nsw w'tt (see above ps. 272/284), all of which show her to be a member of the aristocracy, without indicating that she was an hereditary heiress.

Ibi was the only one of the husbands of the hereditary heiresses under consideration here to claim to be the ruler of his wife's inheritance, but since he lived in the Sixth Dynasty, while all the other cases belong to the Middle Kingdom, customs may have changed. There is no information as to whether Hm(t)-R' exercised any influence over the administration of her nome, indeed, she might have pre-deceased her brothers, in which case Ibi would have taken the title of Great Chief of Dw-ft because he was administering it on behalf of a young son.

(b) The mother of Hty of Siût \*(39) (End of the First Intermediate Period).

The information concerning the activities of the mother of Hty is to

be found in his tomb (no.5 at Siût), and, unfortunately, the inscriptions concerning her are those that have suffered the most damage over the centuries. Just enough remains to show that, on the death of his maternal grandfather, the ruler of Siût, Hty, was still a young child and his mother, through whom he derived his claim to the inheritance, took over the administration of the area, to the apparent satisfaction of the townsfolk (line 30), until her son was of age, or nht <sup>i</sup>, strong of arm, which is the term employed in the inscription.

It is greatly to be deplored that Hty does not inform us as to whether or not his father was alive at this time, but he does not appear to have named his father anywhere in the text. It would also have been interesting to know whether his mother was obliged to hand over the reins of government when her son attained his majority, or whether it was a voluntary gesture. Hty himself seems to have considered that the inheritance was his from the moment of his grandfather's death, even though his mother did the actual ruling for a while, so it may be that, as with the kingship, a woman might exercise power on behalf of her son, but might not take the actual titles and rule in her own name. Whatever titles the mother of Hty may have borne were not recorded in his tomb.

(c) Bjkt of Beni Hasan \*(40) (Dynasty XII).

Information concerning this woman comes from the tomb of her son, Hnm(w)-htp the second, where she is identified as the daughter of Hnm(w)-htp the first, the Great Chief of the Oryx nome and h3ty-<sup>i</sup> of Menat Khufu, born of his wife, the 3ryt p't S3t-3p.

On the death of Hnm(w)-htp the first, his titles passed to his son, Nht the first, but he must have died soon afterwards, leaving no children, so

his sister Bjkt was his heiress. Bjkt was married to Nhri<sup>1</sup> the first, but Nhri did not succeed to any of his brother-in-laws dignities. Instead, a man called Imn-m-hjt (tomb no.2 at Beni Hasan), appears to have become the nemarch, while the district known as Menat Khufu passed to Hnm(w)-htp the second, the son of Bjkt and Nhri<sup>1</sup>.

The tomb of Nhri<sup>1</sup> and Bjkt has not been identified, and the date of their death is not known, so there is no way of deciding whether one or both ever took an active role in the administration of Menat Khufu. In her son's tomb, however, Bjkt is awarded the rare titles of iry p't h3tyt-' (see above p. 267).

(d) Hty of Beni Hasan (Dynasty XII).




The titles and family connections of Hty are recorded in two tombs at Beni Hasan belonging to her husband, Hnm(w)-htp the second \*(41), and Ntr-nht \*(42), an ancestor for whom Hnm(w)-htp the second constructed a tomb. Here she is said to be s3t h3ty-' iry p't h3ty-' and her father is identified as the hk3, ruler, of the Jackal nome.

Hty was her father's heiress, but her husband did not become ruler of the Jackal nome, which instead passed to her son, Nht the second, while another son, Nhri<sup>1</sup> the second, was designated the heir of Menat Khufu.

Since the event is recorded in his ~~autobiography~~ autobiography, the elevation of his son to the governorship of the Jackal nome must have taken place during the lifetime of Hnm(w)-htp. What is not known is whether Hty was still alive, and indeed, whether her son succeeded to the inheritance the moment his grandfather died, or whether, as in the case of Hty of Siût, he was too young at the time and his mother acted for him for a while. If

the latter were the case, it might explain why she was entitled ỉryt p't h3tyt-

(e) The daughter of Hnm(w)-h̄tp the second (Dynasty XII).

Hnm(w)-h̄tp and H̄ty had three daughters, one of whom was made ruler of the town of    \*(43). The information is given in her father's tomb,

but he omits to say which of his daughters was so honoured. He also fails to mention if she was married, but, married or single, the donation took place during the lifetime of Hnm(w)-h̄tp, and the use of the word hk3 would imply that she took over the direction of affairs in her newly acquired appenage.

(f) Mrs̄ỉ of Meir (Dynasty XII).

Mrs̄ỉ was the daughter of the second Wh-h̄tp, and the sister of his successor Sn̄bỉ, in whose tomb her stela was erected \*(44). Sn̄bỉ appears to have died young, without a wife or child.

Mrs̄ỉ was married to Wh-h̄tp the third, who may have been her cousin, and Blackman suggests that, on the death of his brother-in-law, this Wh-h̄tp may have taken over the administration of Meir on behalf of his wife \*(45). If this was so, he cannot have enjoyed the position for long, since his tomb is very small and is unfinished. Moreover, if he had held such a position, it is strange that his son, Wh-h̄tp the fourth, who succeeded to the governorship, should only refer to his father as a s3 h3ty- \*(46), and not even acknowledge him to be an ỉry p't h3ty-.

Blackman notes that the tombs of Sn̄bỉ and Wh-h̄tp the third, numbers B.3 and A.3 respectively, closely resemble each other, so Wh-h̄tp the fourth may have been responsible for the excavation of both \*(47). If this is so, it is possible that Wh-h̄tp the third, Mrs̄ỉ and Sn̄bỉ may all have died at roughly the same time \*(48), so when the fourth Wh-h̄tp had to provide them with monuments,

he chose to associate his mother, Mrsi<sup>1</sup>, with her brother Snb<sup>1</sup>, rather than, more conventionally, including her in her husband's tomb, because the . succession came to him via Snb<sup>1</sup> and Mrsi<sup>1</sup>. If Mrsi<sup>1</sup> did die before, or about the same time as Snb<sup>1</sup>, it would account for the absence of titles other than s3t h3ty-<sup>1</sup> and mbt pr on her stela.

(g) Stt-htp of Elephantine.

Stt-htp has no known tomb of her own and she appears only in the tombs of her father, S3-Rnpwt the first, and her son, S3-Rnpwt the second, so in both tombs her role is naturally of secondary importance \*(49). The younger S3-Rnpwt did not even bother to record the name of his father, presumably because all his dignities were inherited from his maternal ancestors, and so, when referring to his mother, he concentrates on the kinship tie, neglecting to include her titles.

The information concerning the rights and duties of hereditary heiresses is therefore disappointing. Clearly there was no law to exclude a woman from inheriting whole districts on the extinction of the direct male line, but, whether she could administer her inheritance in person, in her own name, is doubtful. In only one case that involved a son inheriting by right of his mother, that of Hty of Siût, can we be absolutely sure that the woman was alive at the time of the death of the man whose heiress she was. The mother of Hty certainly did rule, but this may well have been as regent for her young son, not in her own name, so perhaps, as with monarchy, a woman might exercise the powers of office as a regent, but could not hold the office itself.



No woman ever appears to have been allowed to take the title of Great Chief of a name, and only Bjkt and Hty appear to have born the rare combination of titles, iryty p't h3tyt-'. It may be that Bjkt and Hty, like the mother of Hty of Siût, inherited their lands while their respective sons, who were to be the real rulers, were still too young to take an active part in the administration. In other cases, the sons of the heiresses may have attained their majority when their maternal inheritance fell vacant, so they needed no regent to act for them, or, as in the case of Mrsi<sup>?</sup>, the mother may have died about the same time as the father or brother whose heiress she was, and thus she would never have had the opportunity to become an iryty p't h3tyt-'. Besides this, the destruction wrought during the last three and a half millennia, combined with sins of omission by the heirs of these women, who were more interested in establishing their descent from the heiresses than in preserving complete lists of anyone's titles but their own, have deprived us of both titles and biographical details.

3) A letter concerning a runaway \*(50) (Late Dynasty XII).

This fragmentary letter was part of the correspondence between two women, both involved in the actual administration of certain estates, and in the legal complications arising therefrom. The writer of the letter informed the recipient that a runaway seff \*(51) named Sbk-m-hb had been apprehended, and that she had had him committed to prison to await a hearing. She then commented on the conduct of another legal action concerning the dispatch of some oil.

These incidents suggest that one, if not both, women were in positions of authority, and that they had a considerable degree of independence of action.

4) The inscription of Ms.

In order to establish his claim to a disputed inheritance, Ms made a lengthy statement concerning the history of the litigation entered into by three generations of his family, and he recorded two separate occasions when the lands were actually farmed by women.

The first such occasion resulted from a psšt made for his grandmother, Wrrr, awarding her the right to administer the disputed estate on behalf of herself, her sister, and her brothers \*(52). Wrrr was made rwḏw, administrator \*(53), of the land because she was the "daughter" of the original owner, Nšf, that is, she was the representative of the senior branch of the family. After Wrrr, the succession passed to her son, Hy, the father of Ms, but he died while Ms was still a child, so his widow, Nb(w)-nfrt, took over the running of the estate \*(54).

A woman might thus be preferred to a man as the administrator of an estate, if she had the best legal claim. There is no reference to Wrrr having a husband to do the real work, and she may well have been a widow. Hy was apparently still a child and played no part in the proceedings. The actions of the widowed Nb(w)-nfrt confirm the rights of a widow to act on behalf of her children, if they were still minors. When she subsequently lost control of the land, it was not because she had no legal claim to it, nor because, as a woman alone, she did not have a chance to fight, but because there was a claimant dishonest enough to forge documents to support his demand to be given control of the property.

## 5) The Wilbour Papyrus (Reign of Ramesses V).

This papyrus deals with the cultivation of land, and the payment of taxes.

Among the lists of those actually tilling farms are the names of twenty-six women \*(55). Of these twenty-six, a few had recently died and been replaced by their children, while others were still alive, but were being helped, either by their children, or other members of their families. The remaining women were managing their farms unaided, and in two instances \*(56), they were cultivating land which belonged to men.

6) The activities of the Chantress of Amun Hnwt-tjwy (Late Ramesside).

The names of Hnwt-tjwy and her husband, Ns-Tmn-Ipt, are found together in several documents, some of which are the records of official grain deliveries, showing that on some occasions the couple received grain together, while at other times Hnwt-tjwy alone was present \*(57). There is also a letter, written by Hnwt-tjwy to her husband, during the absence of the latter on business \*(58). Hnwt-tjwy had been left in charge of the family's affairs, and was also still involved in the receipt and storage of royal and temple grain, a troublesome responsibility which caused a dispute with the staff of the vizier, at a time when the father of Ns-Tmn-Ipt was himself involved in a legal action.

7) The affairs of the scribe Dhwty-ms \*(59) (Late Ramesside).

This well-known Scribe of the Necropolis must frequently have been away from home on official business, and during one such absence he wrote to a man and woman, who were caring for his affairs. Besides discussing purely personal matters, such as the treatment of various members of the family and the issuing of instructions for the management of his own property, he also made comments which reveal that the couple had also been entrusted with the execution of some of his official duties.

8) The letters to the Chantress of Amun Mwt-n-Tpt \*(60) (Late Ramesside)

A scribe who had to be away on official business, appointed Mwt-n-Tpt to manage his farm in his absence. He wrote to her on one occasion, giving her authority to dispose of a piece of land, and to conclude a deal in metal on his behalf.

The right to conduct business deals.

The evidence considered in the previous paragraphs mainly concerned the cultivation of the land, and the rights of women to administer it, but some of the examples quoted also, incidentally, showed that the administration of land could lead to involvement in business transactions. These transactions were extensions of estate management, since they were concerned with those exchanges of goods and services, payments of taxes and dues, and sales of land, which are an integral part of agrarian life in a well-organised community, and which are to be found in a country where a large percentage of the population is directly engaged in agricultural pursuits. There are, however, other documents, which show women engaged in purely commercial ventures, and even public affairs, which have no direct dependence on agriculture or estate management. They appear to have undertaken such ventures sometimes in partnership with a male colleague, but also as independent operators.

Most of the available evidence is dated to the New Kingdom or later, but this is probably the result of accidents of survival.

Examples:

1) Market stall proprietors.

Very few tomb owners chose to include scenes showing the activities of

markets and small private traders. The earliest surviving scene comes from the Old Kingdom, and it shows women buying produce from stalls run by men \*(61).

An Eighteenth Dynasty tomb at Thebes \*(62) shows the arrival of Syrian merchant ships at an Egyptian port, where small stalls have been erected on the quayside, offering textiles, foodstuffs, sandals, and other commodities not so easily identifiable. The proprietors of these stalls are all women.

The other scene of this type belongs to the Nineteenth Dynasty, and it also shows the arrival of ships at a quayside \*(63). On the quay, one woman has erected a small reed shelter where she is selling wine and beer, while another woman has fish for sale, and two more are offering food. There are also some men who appear to have grain for sale.

It is therefore only from the Eighteenth Dynasty that there is definite evidence for women actually selling produce on market stalls, but so little information is available on this subject that it would be wrong to assume that they did not participate in this business earlier.

2) The transactions of Hk3-nht and S3t-nb-ahw.

The details of this case have already been commented on, see above, p. 359.

3) The problems of the nbt pr 3rt \*(64) (Dynasty XII).

The nbt pr 3rt wrote to her master (nb), asking advice as to how to proceed in a difficult problem. She was apparently in charge of a group of women who were producing cloth for a temple, and they were performing their duties in a very dilatory manner.

4) Contracts to hire servants (Dynasty XVIII).

The first contract is dated to year 33 of Amenhotep III, and records

an agreement whereby a woman and her son hired out the services of two of their slaves (hmt), one for a period of seventeen, or possibly seven, days, the other for four days \*(65).

The second contract \*(66) states that a woman had hired out the services of her hmt for ten days, in return for which she was to receive a measure of silver.

5) The purchase of two slaves \*(67) (Reign of Ramesses II).

The 'nht nt nwt Iryt-nfrt had purchased two slaves, directly from a dealer, and, though married, she did not seek her husband's consent, nor apply to him for financial assistance, but obtained the requisite purchase price from her own resources and by trading with, or perhaps by obtaining credit from, two other women and four men. The lawsuit ensued because Iryt-nfrt was said to have pledged a tomb to the merchant, in exchange for one of the slaves, but her ownership of this tomb was challenged.

Besides the interesting financial manoeuvres of Iryt-nfrt, this document also provides the valuable information that the tomb under dispute had been commissioned by a woman called Bjk(t)-Mwt, presumably for her own use.

6) A letter to a prince \*(68) (Reign of Seti II).

This letter was written by a woman to a son of Ramesses II. She had been urged by another woman to have certain work done in an exceptionally fine style, but lacked the skilled craftsmen necessary to execute the commission. She therefore appealed to "her good lord" to send instructors to teach her labour force the requisite skills.

7) A letter from an instructress \*(69) (Reign of Seti II).

This letter was written directly to the monarch by a woman who had been commissioned to train people sent to her for instruction. Clearly she

must have been of very high standing to be able to address the king direct.

8) The affairs of the Chantress of Amun Hmwt-tjwy.

Attention has already been drawn to the activities of this woman, both in managing her husband's affairs during his absence, and in participating in the official receipt of temple and royal grain, see above p. 368 .

9) An appeal for instructions \*(70) (Late Ramesside).

A group of men had been given a commission by the Viceroy of Kush (s3 nsw n K3š), but they had failed to complete the task because the ship they were to have used had sunk. In the absence of the Viceroy, they appealed to their mistress (hmwt) for further instructions. Since she had authority to speak on his behalf, this woman was probably the wife of the Viceroy. Having followed her instructions, the men were later able to report that the mission was successfully accomplished.

10) An official rebuke \*(71) (Late Ramesside).

The Principal of the Harim of Amen-Re (wrt hmr n Imn-R') named Hrrt, was clearly accustomed to playing an active role in government administration since these two letters, written to a high-ranking army officer, concern the disbursement of rations to the necropolis workers. Finding that he had failed to comply with her earlier instructions, Hrrt wrote a very sharp letter of rebuke, recommending immediate compliance, unless he wished to face the unpleasant consequences resulting from further failure.

11) A conspiracy (Late Ramesside).

There are three extraordinary letters in Berlin \*(72) concerning the activities of an unnamed General of Pharaoh (imy-r ms' n pr '3), some lesser officials, and the Principal of the Harim of Amen-Re, Ndm(t), who were all

engaged in an elaborate plot to lure two Medjay to the house of one of the principals, where they were to be closely questioned concerning some matter, and then murdered and thrown into the river, under cover of darkness. The contents of the letters leave little doubt that the lady was one of the prime-movers of this unsavoury scheme.

12) The activities of the tomb robbers (Late Ramesside).

Having been beaten and had the oath administered to her, the 'nht nt nwt Iwn-x'j admitted that her husband had been involved in a robbery, and that his share had been paid in copper, and she added, "We traded with it and spent it" \*(73). The choice of the plural pronoun indicates that she played as active a role as her husband in these transactions.

Another woman, the 'nht nt nwt 3st, the wife of a gardener, had fallen under suspicion because she had been spending too freely, and had purchased some servants (b3kw). Her defence was that she had been using the profits obtained from her own business dealings, not loot given her by her husband \*(74).

Iry-nfr, the wife of another tomb robber, also fell under suspicion, because she, like 3st, had been recklessly spending her husband's loot. She claimed that the silver she had used to purchase some servants had been her profits from the sale of barley during the recent famine \*(75).

In each case the women had been buying and selling goods and slaves, without any apparent aid or permission from their respective husbands.

13) The John Rylands Catalogue \*(76).

A considerable number of business records and contracts were published by Griffiths in this catalogue, and many of them concern deals involving



women. To avoid needless repetition, a selection of typical documents involving women is presented here.

(a) Papyrus Louvre 3228A (Dynasty XXV). A man and his sister were in need of funds to provide their parents with adequate funeral equipment and to meet this emergency they sold a slave \*(77). It is interesting to note that, though a son was usually given the credit for a parent's burial, here a daughter is making her contribution too.

(b) Papyrus Louvre E3168 (Dynasty XXV). A woman sold a man thread for weaving, and in this document acknowledged that, having received payment, she had no further claim on the thread \*(78).

(c) Papyrus Louvre E706 (Dynasty XXVI). This document recorded the ratification of a contract by which a woman sold herself, and any children she might have, in return for a payment of silver \*(79).

(d) John Rylands Papyrus XVII (Ptolemy Euergetes II). This records the gift of a house by a man to his son. The gift required the sanction of the man's wife because he had previously mortgaged the house to her. This well illustrates the independent nature of a woman's finances from those of her husband \*(80).

(e) John Rylands Papyrus XXIX (Ptolemy Alexander I and Berenike). This contract recorded the purchase of a piece of land and a garden from the family who had owned them jointly. The purchaser was a woman \*(81).

14) The Siût Archive \*(82) (Ptolemy VI Philometor).

This is an agreement, under which two brothers promised not to impede the woman 'w', when she began building operations on a house she owned. The contracting parties appear to have exchanged property and deeds of agreement. The property under discussion formed no part of the disputed land in the great lawsuit.

15) The sale of inherited property (First Century B.C.).

A woman bought a house, a mill and granaries from the joint owners, see above p. 352 .

The above selection of documents reveals that, certainly from the Middle Kingdom, and probably from a much earlier date, women were regularly and actively engaged in buying and selling agricultural produce, land, manufactured goods, buildings, and slaves. These transactions were usually of a private nature, concerning only the contracting parties, but priestesses might also be empowered to play a role in the administration of public and temple funds.

Women as witnesses.

There is so little evidence available concerning the role of women as witnesses, either to contracts and documents, or in court proceedings that it is unwise to make any definite pronouncements as to the extent of their rights to act, and the periods of history when they were allowed to exercise these powers. The documents quoted below all happen to belong to a relatively short space of time during the New Kingdom, but this may be due to an accident of survival.

(a) Women as witnesses in court.

Examples:

1) The inscription of Ms.

In order to deprive Nb(w)-nfrt and her son Ms of control of the disputed land, one of their rivals tampered with the official registers, entering false statements. Later, Ms, having located several witnesses who could swear to the justice of his claim as the direct descendant of Ns<sup>v</sup>1 in the

senior branch of the family, entered an appeal against the former judgement and won. Among the witnesses who appeared for him were some women.

2) The purchase of two slaves.

During the course of the proceedings against the 'nht nt nwt irt-nrt, witnesses were called to give evidence concerning the ownership of certain properties, including a tomb. Six witnesses were questioned, three of whom were women entitled 'nht nt nwt.

3) The great tomb robberies.

In the course of the trial of those accused of robbing the royal tombs, several women were charged with being accessories to the crimes and of being receivers of stolen goods. Besides these accused, two other women also appeared, summoned as witnesses for the prosecution.

The first of these women was the 'nht nt nwt T3-'3-pr. After she had been brought in and beaten, she gave evidence of how one day she had been sitting, hungry, under a tree, when she saw one of the robbers selling some of the stolen copper, and how she had subsequently reported this to the authorities \*(83). The second witness, the 'nht nt nwt Šdh-nht, was a servant in the house of one of the accused. She too was beaten and took the oath before giving evidence. She was questioned about the identity of the people she had admitted to her master's house, but she persisted in denying all knowledge of the matter \*(84).

Though neither woman was accused of being an accessory, both were subjected to the customary beating before they gave evidence.

(b) Women as witnesses to private contracts.

Examples:

1) Contracts of hire \*(85) (Late Eighteenth Dynasty).

There are four documents concerning the activities of the cowherd Msi,

who, on various occasions, hired the services of one or more female slaves (hmt) from their masters. These transactions were witnessed in due form, and among the witnesses to one of the contracts was a Nubian woman \*(86), while on another occasion, the list of witnesses included a woman and her daughter, and a man, his wife, and their daughter \*(87).

2) The adoption of N3-nfr.

The two documents by which N3-nfr was adopted by her husband, and then herself adopted two men and two women, were witnessed by several people, some of whom were women.

Women as principals in lawsuits.

The number of extant documents dealing with lawsuits in which a woman was the plaintiff or defendant is small, but there is enough evidence to indicate that, certainly from the Middle Kingdom onwards, women were able to engage in litigation, either with the support of their relatives, or independently if necessary.

(a) Women as defendants.

Examples:

1) Harem conspiracies.

Records have survived of two occasions when intrigue within the royal household lead to the trial of the conspirators. The first occurred during the reign of Pepi I, and is recorded in the biography of an official called Wni \*(88). Wni was a favourite courtier, who was entrusted with the secret trial of no less a person than the Great Royal Wife. The crime of which she was accused is not revealed, and Wni<sup>2</sup> maintained a discrete silence as to her fate.

The better documented trial occurred as a result of an attempt on the life of Ramesses III \*(89). The surviving records note that six women were among the prime movers of the conspiracy, and that they were allowed to commit suicide \*(90).

Perhaps in neither trial was there much doubt as to the eventual verdict, but at least there was a trial and not an indiscriminate massacre. However, it should be noted that the judges in the Ramesside case had considerable discretion. Mutilation, banishment, suicide and execution were ordered for various degrees of involvement, and some of the women thought they could influence the verdict by selling their favours to the judges \*(91).

2) The case of Tti, daughter of Sj-Inhr \*(92) (Dynasty XIII).

This document lists the names and fates of the people who had absconded in order to avoid performing the labour services required by the State, or who had run away during their period of labour. Among the defaulters was the woman Tti, who was subsequently recaptured. Clearly women were liable to the same services as men, and to the same penalties if they defaulted, including having their families seized until they were captured.

3) The trial of Iryt-nfrt.

The 'nht nt niwt Iryt-nfrt was brought to trial because, it was alleged, she had bought two slaves with goods that were not hers to pledge. Although she stated that she had been married for seven years, her husband took no part in the proceedings, and there is no suggestion that he was considered in any way responsible for his wife's debts.

Iryt-nfrt took the oath, "As Amun endures and as the ruler endures" (wjh Iam wjh p3 hk3) \*(93), pledging that she had acted honestly on pain of receiving 100 strokes and losing the services of one of the slaves she had bought.

4) Restitution of stolen property \*(94) (Dynasty XIX).

A woman was convicted of stealing several items, including cloth and bronze vessels, and she was sentenced to compensate her victims by paying back double the value of some goods and triple the value of others.

The woman in question happened to be a slave (hmt), belonging to a charioteer, but there was no suggestion that her owner was responsible for making restitution. This serves as a further reminder that the translation of hmt by slave is unsatisfactory, (see above Section III, p.325 ) since we normally regard a slave as one who, by definition, could hold no property of his or her own and would therefore be incapable of paying compensation.

5) The great tomb robberies trials.

Papyrus Mayer A concludes with lists of the convicted thieves, and notes their punishments. Among the fourteen people found guilty of robbing the Corridor-House of Pharaoh there was one woman \*(95), but eleven other women were sent to prison as accessories and receivers of stolen goods \*(96), including 3st and Iry-nfr, who had given themselves away by their reckless spending of their ill-gotten gains (see above p. 373 , no.12), and a woman called Ns-Mwt, who was convicted of having stored a quantity of stolen silver in her house \*(97).

One member of the gang of robbers had died or disappeared during, or just after, a robbery, and his wife had been allotted his share of the loot, but two members of the gang returned later and forced her to give up her share. She told this story at the trial \*(98), and so appears to have escaped the penalty that would otherwise have been hers as a receiver of stolen goods.

Of these cases, the third and the fifth are of the greatest value since

they record court proceedings in some detail, and they show that the women all conducted their cases alone, though they all seem to have been married. No document makes any reference to an advisor or spokesman. Women took the same oath by Amun and the ruler as men, were subject to the same punishments, and when the court wished to obtain information, beatings were administered, regardless of sex. Thus women could expect no special treatment in court, but do not appear to have been discriminated against either.

(b) Women as plaintiffs.

Examples:

1) The case of T3-hnwt.

The plaintiff in this case was a young woman called T3-hnwt, who sued her father because she claimed that some of the property he was about to settle on his second wife included items that belonged to T3-hnwt, being gifts from her husband.

Presumably the husband of T3-hnwt was alive and prepared to substantiate her claim, but the lawsuit is specifically said to have been brought at the instigation of T3-hnwt alone \*(99), indicating that women were legally entitled to act in their own name, and were capable of doing so.

2) The inscription of Ms.

In the series of legal battles fought over the inheritance of Nsi<sup>2</sup>, three women appear among the leading protagonists. The first case, brought during the reign of Horemheb, resulted in Wnmr obtaining a judgement in her favour and being appointed the administrator of the estates, in the face of the combined opposition of her "sister" and "brothers". The sister, T3-hrt, was so dissatisfied with the judgement of the court that she brought new proceedings on her own \*(100), which she conducted skilfully enough to win

a re-appraisal by the court, and a division of the land between the six heirs.

After an unspecified length of time, Wrrr, this time acting in conjunction with her son Hy, brought another action, which went in favour of mother and son, and when Hy died prematurely, his widow assumed control of the estate, in the name of their young son, Ms.

The widowed Nb(w)-nfrt soon had to take one of her rivals, H'y, to court, because he was challenging her position, but she lost her case because H'y and his accomplices had been tampering with the official registers.

Thus Wrrr, T3-hrt, and Nb(w)-nfrt all appeared in court, both in the roles of plaintiff and defendant, sometimes acting alone, sometimes acting in conjunction with their male relatives. There are no references to any of the women using male advisors or spokesmen, when they were acting alone, and the way the action of Nb(w)-nfrt is recorded, it certainly appears that she was conducting her own case \*(101).

### 3) The oath of Nhm-Mwt \*(102) (Reign of Ramesses III).

Bodleian Ostrakon 253 records an oath, sworn by one Nhm-Mwt, before four witnesses. He had been guilty of physical cruelty to his wife and had to promise not to maltreat her again on pain of a beating and a financial penalty.

Nhm-Mwt took his oath before witnesses, but it is regrettably far from clear whether these men were sitting in a regular court, or whether these were simply acquaintances of the interested parties, called in to witness a private contract. Nor is it possible to decide whether an Egyptian



woman had any legal right to protection against a cruel husband. In this case, it is clear that the wife's father had intervened on behalf of his daughter, and exerted enough legal, moral, or economic pressure on his errant son-in-law to extract the oath.

4) An oracle concerning a well \*(103) (Reign of Sheshonk I).

A priest called Ns-B3stt brought an action to establish the validity of his claim to a certain well, which was the property of his mother. The case was taken before the divine oracle, and the god confirmed the justice of his claim, as the only surviving son of his mother, the true owner. The mother of Ns-B3stt was apparently alive at the time of the appeal, but she did not consult the oracle herself, so she may have handed over control of her property to her son.

5) A letter from a priestess \*(104).

This was written by a šm'yt nt Dwtj, a Chantress of Thoth, to her šmsw, retainer, Imn-h'i(w), instructing him to proceed with a legal action against a certain merchant, whose oath she wished to have annulled, despite the fact that he had been trying to appease her with flattery.

6) A business letter \*(105).

The writer of this letter was endeavouring to recover some cattle belonging to him, which had somehow found their way into the possession of a woman called T3-k3rt. He therefore appealed to the woman called Ktty, who had already taken T3-k3rt to the court of the vizier on some other matter, suggesting that they might move together against their mutual enemy

7) A report to a superior \*(106)

The writer reported to his superior on the progress of several matters

including a legal action concerning a harvest tax, which he was contending in court with the wife of a scribe.

8) The Siût Archive \*(107) (Second Century B.C.).

A man called Pj-di-îtm executed a series of property settlements for the children of his first wife, his second wife, and the children of the second wife, and then died, before the children of the second marriage had reached maturity. Twt, the son of the first wife, assumed control of the property of the young half-brother until the latter, on coming of age, went to court to gain possession of his inheritance. Twt lost his case, despite the efforts of his wife Hrdw-'nh, but a few years later she initiated an action, claiming all the land belonged to her and Twt, by virtue of the deeds of endowment \*(108) made by Twt for Hrdw-'nh and by Pj-di-îtm for the mother of Twt.

Hrdw-'nh had been active during the first case brought by her young brother-in-law in year 8 of Ptolemy Philometer (174/3 B.C.), but the action of year 11 was specifically said to have been brought by Hrdw-'nh herself "in the name of her husband" \*(109). Twt was alive at the time, but no explanation is offered as to why he was not conducting the case himself. He could have been ill, or away on official business, but if this were so, a statement to this effect would surely have been made in court. It may well be that Twt, more of a realist, or less acquisitive, than his wife, realised the hopelessness of the case, since he himself had ratified the deed of apportionment (sh dn ps) made by his father for his young half-brother \*(110).

Though she lacked the support of her husband, Hrdw-'nh seems to have had some assistance from a man called Wrts. He may have helped her

assemble the evidence, but he only appears to have spoken once, towards the end of the proceedings, so he can hardly have been an advocate to fight her case for her \*(111).

### Marriage.

#### a) Establishing the bond.

When a man and a woman officially set up house together as husband and wife, it is customary in most societies to mark the event with some form of ceremony before witnesses. Such a ceremony may take the form of a religious ritual, or a civil contract, or it may partake of both elements.

Despite the efforts of some authors to reconstruct a temple ceremony before an officiating priest \*(112), there is no record of any religious ritual that can be connected with marriage in Pharaonic Egypt. Though a temple ceremony must be discounted on present evidence, it is possible that some offerings may have been made to one or more deities, perhaps in a domestic chapel or shrine, in order to call down divine blessing on the union, but again, there is no evidence available at present to suggest that such an offering took place.

A substantial number of documents have survived from the first millenium B.C., which record marriage settlements, but it would be wrong to assume that the sealing of such documents marked the formal commencement of a marriage, even though they usually contain the words "I have made you wife", or, "You have made me wife". In each case, the documents are concerned with establishing the financial rights and obligations of the couple, not with the act of marriage itself. Moreover, one such contract was drawn up in year 22 of King Amasis, replacing a previous contract,

which had been drawn up in year 15 of the same king. Of course, it is possible that the man and the woman had married each other twice within seven years, but it more likely that a new financial situation, such as the birth of children, made a reassessment of their financial affairs desirable. \*(113). It should also be noted that, after studying all the relevant contracts, Möller calculated that between a fifth and a quarter of the couples involved, already had children at the time they drew up the contracts \*(114). If these contracts were marriage contracts, then a surprisingly high percentage of couples did not marry until they had one or more children.

If there was no religious ceremony, and the only known contracts concern the settlement of property in marriage, and not the registration of the event of marriage, then an alternative solution must be sought to the problem of how the marriage bond was solemnized in ancient Egypt.

The Egyptian language had no specific word for "a wedding". Instead, phrases appear, such as grg pr, establish a house, 'k r pr enter a house (in order to be married), irī m hmt (or hy), take as a wife (or husband), and rdī n A, B m hmt, give B to A as wife, but these are not particularly informative as to how the marriage bond was actually established.

A hint of the probable answer to the problem is to be found in the Setne stories, one of which recounts how a bride was taken in procession to the house of her bridegroom, where there was feasting and presents were given to the young couple \*(115). A suggestion of the same procedure is to be found in the biography of Hnm(w)-hṯp the second of Beni Hasan, who recounts how, when his father and mother were to be married, she journeyed to the palace of Amenemhat I, where her bridegroom was residing \*(116). Both incidents involve a formal approach by the bride and her family to the residence of the groom.

Though there must naturally have been some exceptions to the rule, it was considered usual for the newly-wed couple to begin their married life in a house provided by the groom \*(117). The authors of the wisdom literature were alive to the dangers of living with in-laws, and recommended the establishment of a separate residence \*(118), for, as Inyy puts it, even birds have to leave the nest \*(119).

A procession, a feast, and a presentation of gifts, together in all probability with a formal declaration of intent on the part of the bride and groom, may well have constituted an Egyptian marriage ceremony. The attendant formality and display would obviously vary according to the wealth and social status of the contracting parties, and the simplest version of all might well have corresponded to a Nineteenth Century A.D. ceremony, quoted by E.W.Lane \*(120): "The merest sentence, 'I give myself to thee', uttered by a female to a man who proposes to become her husband (even without the presence of witnesses, if none can be easily procured) renders her his legal wife, if arrived at puberty".

b) Financial position during marriage.

It is an unfortunate, but inescapable fact that, barring a stroke of extreme good fortune, a woman who marries a poor man is likely to be poor herself for the rest of her life. Perhaps this was what was in the mind of 'nh-ššnk when he wrote, "A man who has no property - his wife is his co-heiress" \*(121).

In many societies it has been customary for a woman on marriage to pass so completely under the control of her husband that her possessions were placed at his disposal, thus reducing her, in economic terms, to total dependence on his good nature \*(122). In contrast to this, the women of

ancient Egypt appear to have enjoyed a relatively favourable financial position, demonstrably at least from the New Kingdom onwards, and probably from much earlier.

Though no documents specifically relating to a married woman's property rights have survived from the Old Kingdom, the fact that Nb-snt \*(123) could draw up an imyt pr to transfer land to the ownership of her children must indicate that, as early as the Third Dynasty, women held land in their own name after marriage, and, even though the actual administration may have been left to their husbands, they could still dispose of their property as and when they pleased. However, there is no information as to whether married women were entitled to a guaranteed maintenance allowance, or what their prospects were in the event of divorce.

Contracts specifically dealing with the disposal of property at marriage are also lacking for the Middle Kingdom. Certain documents have survived from that epoch, recording the transference of property from husband to wife, but neither the imyt pr or W3h, nor the 3wt made for Snbti3y (see above p. 351, nos. 10 and 11 respectively) can be considered to be marriage contracts, since they were drawn up after, not as a prior condition to, marriage, and in any case, the imyt pr was used to formalise transactions between contracting parties other than husbands and wives. Neither the imyt pr nor the 3wt make any reference to any special marriage fund, held jointly by a husband and wife.

Property settlements of the Late Period regularly contain clauses specifying the amount of maintenance to be paid annually to the wife \*(124), but the custom of apportioning rations to members of a household according to their status and kinship was certainly an ancient one \*(125).

With the advent of the New Kingdom, more information becomes available, and certain facts can be established concerning the regulation and apportionment of matrimonial property. It was the custom at that time to establish, at marriage, a pool of property, to be held jointly by the husband and wife for the duration of their union, and of which two-thirds were to be contributed by the man, and one-third by the woman \*(126). During the passage of time, this marriage fund might increase in value \*(127), and the increase would presumably be divided in the same two to one ratio, though, under certain circumstances, misconduct on the part of one of the contracting parties might lead to the guilty partner forfeiting his or her right to the increased substance \*(128).

This jointly held property was a way of ensuring the future of a woman and her children, in the event of divorce or widowhood (see below p.396/400), but the wife was not expected to contribute all she owned to the fund. Attention has already been drawn to the fact that a woman might hold other property, which preserved its separate identity all through her married life and which she was free to dispose of at her own discretion (see above p.354 , no.5). Similarly, when a man married, he cannot have put his entire estate into the marriage fund, because two-thirds were eventually destined for the children of the union, and one-third for his wife, in the event of her divorce or widowhood \*(129), yet many men married more than once, so they must have had more property with which to endow their other wives.

It is only from the Late Period, however, that documents have survived, drawn up in standard legal formulae, specifically dealing with the property settlements within marriage. These contracts have been extensively analysed by P.W.Pestman \*(130), who recognised the existence of three different types of contract, which he designated "A", "B", and "C".

Type A was the sh m hmt, the earliest examples of which was found in Thebes and dates to the Ninth Century B.C. (131). These contracts have varying numbers of clauses, but they all basically concern the financial arrangement of the marriage and the security of inheritance of the children of the union. The distinguishing feature of these contracts is that the bridegroom pays the bride, or in later versions promises to pay her in the event of a divorce, a šp m šhmt, a consideration for (marrying) a woman, besides making other provisions for her welfare during marriage and after divorce.

Type B was the hd m ir hmt, the money to become a wife, and the first known example also comes from Thebes and is dated to 517 B.C. \*(132). Besides dealing with such considerations as the annual maintenance to be paid to the wife and her guaranteed rights in the event of a divorce, the essential feature of these contracts is an acknowledgement on the part of the husband that he had received a payment from his wife, the hd m ir hmt.

Type C was the sh m s'nh, the deed of maintenance, and the first available deed of this type comes from Hawara and is dated to 361 B.C. \*(133). It closely resembles the documents of type B in that here too, a payment is made by the wife to the husband, and provisions are agreed upon for her maintenance during and after marriage, but deeds of type C also include a deed of payment, a sh (n) db3 hd. This clause states that the husband has sold his property to his wife in return for the s'nh, but this deed was not executed unless the man divorced his wife and failed to return the s'nh as the law demanded.

Besides these sums paid to, or by, the wife, there is also evidence that, during the Late Period \*(134), it was customary for the bride to bring certain personal possessions to her new house. These articles, known



as the nktw n shmt, the goods of a woman, might include such items as jewellery, toilet articles, clothing \*(135), musical instruments, furniture, and copper. The husband had to acknowledge that the goods had been brought to the house. While they were married, the wife had the use (sy) of them, but the husband had the right to dispose of them (shf), provided that, in the event of a divorce, he returned to her articles of equivalent value.

Quite clearly, during their long history, Egyptian ideas concerning the financial provisions which should be made for a wife, and the ways in which they should be established in law, were subject to change and development. Detailed evidence, in the form of contracts, may be lacking for much of Pharaonic history, but documents dating from the Middle Kingdom show that husbands were in the habit of transferring property to their wives by various deeds of gift, and, at least by the New Kingdom, it was customary for an amount to be held jointly by a husband and wife, in a two to one ratio.

c) The correct treatment and behaviour of a wife.

The sage Pth-htp recommended his son to marry early, then to feed, clothe, and attend to his wife's physical needs, loving her with modesty and decorum, because thus she would be contented, and a contented wife was a "profitable field for her lord" \*(136). The theme was enlarged upon by the man who wrote a letter to his dead wife, seeking to prove to the apparently malignant spirit, that he had been a good husband, who had never given her any cause for complaint \*(137). He reminded her that, though they had been married young, before he rose to his present position of eminence, on attaining power, he had not set her aside, and he had not been unfaithful to her, but had caused all to treat her with honour,

and he had consulted her wishes on important issues. All her bodily needs had been attended to and, and during her last illness, no expense had been spared to procure for the best treatment. When, finally, all remedies having failed, she died, he had buried her with great pomp, mourning her deeply, and remained unmarried during the three years that had elapsed between her death and the writing of the letter.

Evidently a man was not only supposed to attend to the bodily requirements of his wife, but also to treat her with kindness and respect, though this was on practical and moral grounds and did not have the force of law. Only in the Ptolemaic Period do contracts appear containing promises to behave as a good spouse \*(138).

In return for this care and attention, a woman was expected to be faithful (see below p. 398), to run his household efficiently and economically \*(139), to support him in his endeavours, to be discrete and pious, and to be a loving and attentive mother to his children. Unfortunately, human nature being what it is, Egyptians of both sexes often found their partner lacked many of the required virtues and accomplishments. It is from the complaints levelled by the sages at the female sex, that we learn what they expected of a good wife, and one suspects, from his dire warnings and acid comments concerning the indiscretions, bad temper, and general extravagance and untrustworthiness of women, that 'nh-ššnk in particular, must have been less than fortunate in his choice of spouse.

In a society which accepted beating as an integral part of the legal system, and as a regular punishment for men, women, and children of all classes, wife beating is likely to have been a fairly common occurrence. Admittedly Nh-mwt had to promise before witnesses that he would never

maltreat his wife (see above p.381 ), on pain of severe punishment, but this was done at the insistence of his father-in-law, so the oath was likely to have been exacted under personal \*(140), rather than legal pressure, and no law appertaining to the consequences of marital cruelty is mentioned. Thus this case cannot be taken to prove that women had legal protection against a cruel husband, but since divorce was a relatively simple process, and the woman's economic rights were legally guarded, there was no reason why she should tolerate a bad husband indefinitely. The author of Louvre Papyrus 2414 recognised this, and recommended that a woman who annoyed her husband should be thrashed, but then allowed to depart with her possessions \*(141).

#### d) Polygamy.

Among the Pharaohs, polygamy \*(142) appears to have been practised regularly, probably from a very early date, but, as has been stressed before, it cannot be assumed that the ordinary Egyptians enjoyed the same matrimonial privileges as their divine rulers.

Herodotus maintained that the Egyptians were monogamous \*(143), while Diodorus claimed that this only applied to the priests \*(144), but their sources of information were not necessarily reliable, and, in any case, both refer to a very late period of Egyptian history.

It is possible to cite many examples of stelae, dating from the late Old Kingdom onwards, which show the owner with more than one wife, but a careful scrutiny of this material shows that neither the inscriptions, nor the arrangement of the figures, give any indication as to whether these marriages ran concurrently or consecutively (see Excursus D, p. 503).

The probably simplicity of divorce proceedings (see below p.397 ), combined with the inevitably high mortality rate, especially among women in child birth, can adequately account for a man having two,

three, or even four wives, one after the other, during the course of his life.

On a stela from Edfu \*(145), the owner refers to his "other" wife, which does suggest that he was married to two women at the same time, but the rest of the text offers little confirmation for this assumption. The stela belongs to a man called H3-'nh.f, and in the third line of the inscription he names one wife only, Hr-mni<sup>2</sup>, and six children. He recounts the story of how he went on a journey to Kush, whence he returned with gold and twenty-six servant women (b3kwt). The profits of this expedition were, however, "consumed" (w3') by a woman called Iy, leaving nothing for "my other wife" (n kt.i hnt), i.e. Hr-mni<sup>1</sup>. H3-'nh.f could have been married to Iy and Hr-mni<sup>2</sup> at the same time, but only Hr-mni<sup>2</sup> is actually said to be his wife in the dedicatory inscription, suggesting that Iy was not his wife at the time this stela was commissioned. Iy could have been his first wife, who had been divorced or died, after having "consumed" her husband's wealth but before his marriage to Hr-mni<sup>2</sup>. Iy could even have appropriated all the funds which H3-'nh.f had intended to use both to secure the divorce and to enable him to marry again.

In lines 9/11, H3-'nh.f records that, subsequent to the Kush venture, he acquired three units of land, one of which was given to Hr-mni<sup>2</sup>, and another to his children, leaving the third for his own use. This suggests that death or divorce must certainly have freed him from Iy, or he would have needed to make some provision for her maintenance.

Some documents of the Middle and New Kingdoms mention re-marriages and their attendant problems, but in every case, the first wife was either dead or divorced, prior to her husband's second marital venture \*(146).

The widower, whose letter to his dead wife has already been referred to (see above p.390), stated that he had married his wife when they were both young, and they must have been married for several years, because he steadily advanced to high office, yet they do not appear to have had any children. If polygamy was a regular feature of life in the Middle Kingdom, it might be expected that this man would have taken a second wife, in order to obtain an heir, or that he would have mentioned his abstinence in his letter, as further proof of his great attachment to his first wife, but he did not do so.

There are only two cases, one dated to the First Intermediate Period, the other to the Middle Kingdom, where there is sufficient evidence to suggest the practice of polygamy, and these will now be considered.

Petrie published a scene from the tomb of the h3ty-' Mry \*(147), which portrayed that nobleman with six women, each said to be his wife (hmt.f), and with the children who had been born in five of these unions. It is possible that Mry had been most unlucky and lost five wives to death or in divorce, so that none of the six marriages were entered into together, but it is more reasonable to accept that he was practising polygamy.

The tomb of Wh-htp the sixth \*(148) shows that he had at least a dozen women in his harem, several of whom were designated wives (see above p.262) and there seems little doubt that he was practising polygamy, and probably concubinage as well.

It is significant that both Mry and Wh-htp were members of the provincial aristocracy, that is, they belonged to the very class who had been gradually encroaching on royal powers and prerogatives \*(149), and who had sufficient wealth to enable them to support several women and their children. Even if the practice of polygamy was permissible in all classes of society, the poor peasant, who only had a few acres to support his dependents, might find that a second family was not an economically viable proposition. It is not

until the Twentieth Dynasty that convincing evidence for polygamy can be found among the lower classes, and even then there are only isolated instances.

Among the women imprisoned for their part in the great tomb robberies, there were two who appear to have been married to the same man:

"The 'nht nt niwt Hrrt, wife of the watchman P3-sr-'3 of the Treasury of Pharaoh.

The 'nht nt niwt T3-nfry, his other wife, making two" \*(150).

This entry seems to make it clear that Hrrt and T3-nfry were married to the same man at the same time.

During the course of the same trials, one woman, Mwt-m-hb, claimed to be one of four wives, two of whom were, by that time, dead. She demanded that the other surviving wife should be called to give evidence, implying that they lived under one roof, and so could vouch for each other's movements \*(151). It is worth noting that there was no apparent jealousy in this household, because Mwt-m-hb clearly expected her story to be substantiated.

The earliest surviving marriage contracts, dating from the beginning of the first millenium B.C., usually include a clause to the effect: "If I abandon you as wife and hate you, and take for myself another wife than (or besides) you .... " \*(152), followed by a promise of payment. In order to establish whether or not polygamy was common practice at that time, it is clearly vitally important to decide which of these alternative translations is the correct one, for if the first is preferred, it would imply that it was customary, though not necessarily obligatory, to sever the marriage bond with one woman before entering into another contract, while the alternative solution would imply that a man could have two wives at once. Edgerton has argued persuasively for the former interpretation

\*(153), and, in view of the fact that compensation was paid to the first wife, Edgerton's solution would appear more logical, because a woman who was divorced, and so forced to leave her home, would need financial assistance, whereas this would hardly be appropriate if the first wife was about to acquire a partner to share her household chores.

Thus the evidence concerning the practice of polygamy in Pharaonic Egypt is unsatisfactory, and in the present state of our knowledge, the most that can be reasonably assumed is that, though polygamy became permissible outside the royal family, it is doubtful whether many availed themselves of the opportunity.

e) Widowhood.

The wills that have survived from the Old Kingdom make no mention of a widow being entitled to a fixed portion of her husband's estate. Tnti<sup>2</sup>, for example, left half his property to his wife (see above p.348 , no.3), whereas the widow of Ni-k3-'nh only received one-thirteenth (see above p.349 , no.5), and such donations of property as are known from the Middle Kingdom give no hint as to what percentage of his assets the man was transferring to his wife. By the late New Kingdom, however, it was established that, in the event of a husband pre-deceasing his wife, she was guaranteed her one-third share of the joint marriage property, and her children were allotted the father's two-thirds share \*(154), though, should the couple be childless, the widow might receive everything, if her husband had made a will to that effect \*(155).

If the wife died before her husband, then her third went straight to her children, provided that they were old enough to administer it, and they would be awarded their father's two-thirds, either on his death or at his re-marriage \*(156). If the father was going to take another wife,

once he had settled the claims arising from the first contract, he would make a new contract with the new wife, endowing her in the same one to two ratio \*(157).

In theory, therefore, at least from the New Kingdom onwards, a widow and her children had a recognised legal claim of her husband's assets, even though in practice, attempts might be made to defraud them of their inheritance. Unless a legal guardian had been appointed, which was probably unlikely (see above p. 355), the widow would have charge of her children and the administration of their property (see above p. 359) and she could, under normal circumstances, expect to receive both moral and financial support from her family \*(158). This is, however, always supposing that the husband had adequate funds with which to endow his family. At any time during Pharaonic history, the death of a poor peasant or craftsman, on whose skills and labour depended the well-being of his family, might leave a family destitute, unless one of his sons was old enough to replace the breadwinner, and it was probably these ever-present unfortunates who benefitted from the much advertised charity of the local officials (see above p. 356).

In the event of being left a widow, an Egyptian woman, provided naturally that her person and possessions could attract a suitor, was perfectly free to marry again if she chose \*(159).

#### f) Divorce.

No description has so far been discovered of the proceedings by which a marriage was formally terminated in ancient Egypt, but many of the marriage contracts of the Late Period do contain a clause relating to divorce, and these begin simply "If I repudiate you" \*(160), suggesting that a statement of intent, probably before witnesses, and possibly accompanied by the formal



quittance of the place of co-habitation by one party, was all that was needed to finalise a separation. A document might be drawn up to establish that both parties had fulfilled all contractual obligations to each other \*(161), but this was a precautionary measure to avoid any subsequent disputes over property, and not a requisite part of the actual divorce proceedings.

The possible causes of divorce in the late contracts are usually listed as:

- (1) "that I hate you",
- (2) "that I want another",
- (3) "that you wish to go yourself" \*(162).

These are usually given from the husband's point of view, because they occur in documents drawn up by men for their wives, but the third of the causes listed above shows that a woman had an equal right to institute divorce proceedings if she so desired \*(163).

Other common causes of divorce are likely to have been barrenness \*(164) and adultery (see below).

Egyptian divorce would therefore seem to have been a relatively easy process, to which no religious obstacle or social stigma was attached, and either partner could ask for the separation. However, the occasion of a divorce, besides formally severing the marriage bond, also necessitated a property settlement.

If a woman divorced her husband, or was divorced by him, she could take away her personal property, together with an additional amount to which she was legally entitled \*(165), unless she was being divorced for adultery, in which case she forfeited all right to the matrimonial property, though her personal assets were inviolate. Though the financial loss thus sustained

by an adulteress was doubtless severe, it was more lenient a penalty than was exacted in most Middle Eastern countries where, at that time, death was considered the appropriate penalty for both the guilty parties \*(166). In Egypt, references to men and women being executed for adultery are only to be found in works of fiction \*(167). The sages, it is true, regularly warned their readers that to lie with a married woman was to court death, but it was death at the hands of an irate husband, not by the judgement of the community \*(168). The only advice the sages offered to the cuckold was that he should find himself another, more virtuous bride \*(169). No advice was offered to a wronged wife, though it was admitted that young, and therefore evidently foolish, men, were prone to forgetting their wives in the pursuit of new loves \*(170). Presumably, since divorce was relatively easy to obtain and her financial position was assured, it was up to the deserted wife to free herself from her worthless partner and to find herself a more loving and reliable spouse.

Although there was a tendency among the sages to place the blame for adultery on the shoulders of designing females \*(171), other passages admit that the male of the species was perfectly capable of taking the initiative and cajoling unfortunate women into committing adultery, and such men brought grief to each woman they pursued \*(172).

The clause in the marriage contracts which released a man from his financial obligations to an adulterous wife was open to abuse, but an innocent wife, falsely accused by an unscrupulous husband, could publically take an oath to establish her innocence \*(173).

Thus the rights of divorced women were legally safeguarded, at least from the New Kingdom onwards \*(174), though unless there was written evidence of ownership, disputes still might arise over property after divorce \*(175).

Similarly the children of both the widow and the divorcee were legally guaranteed a percentage of their father's possessions \*(176), but this admirable principle, even when reinforced by written safeguards, was not always observed in practice, and could result not only in family feuds and litigations \*(177), but even in murder, if works of fiction can be taken to reflect life at all accurately \*(178).

Once a woman had been divorced, all necessary formalities had been observed, and such property as she was entitled to had been handed over, she was a completely independent agent, and was able to marry again if she wished, free from all threat of interference by her former husband \*(179).

Since divorce was so easily obtained, and could be accomplished at the request of either party, it is a little surprising to find that some people should have felt the need to enter into written agreements, specifically limiting the duration of their marriage, but whatever the motive, such an agreement is known \*(180).

g) Adoption.

"And mourning within herself she said, Woe is me, who begat me? And what womb did bear me, that I should be thus accursed before the children of Israel, and that they should reproach and deride me in the temple of my God: Woe is me, to what can I be compared? I am not comparable to the very beasts of the earth, for even the beasts of the earth are fruitful before thee, O Lord! Woe is me, to what can I be compared?" \*(181).

The desire for a child of one's own has been common to all peoples at all times, and barrenness has always been a particularly bitter affliction for a woman. In Egypt, though some sages might warn that children were a source of grief and trouble (see above p. 344) nevertheless, they urged their male readers to marry early and beget many children \*(182), and a barren woman might find herself divorced.

Isis, the greatest of the Egyptian mother goddesses would be the natural recipient of many of the prayers of childless women, but, in Middle Kingdom at any rate, people were also in the habit of appealing to their dead relatives for help in this matter. The request might be written on a small statuette, or in letter form, and then placed in the tomb of a relative, who might be expected to be well-disposed to his anxious descendants \*(183). But if all prayers, which had doubtless also been supplemented by magic spells \*(184), failed, then other expedients might be tried.

The first, direct reference to adoption does not occur in Egypt till the reign of Ramesses XI, but it is reasonable to assume that, as in Mesopotamia \*(185), it was known from a much earlier period. The first Egyptian example concerns the woman N3-nfr who, having been adopted by her own husband and made his heir, later herself adopted her own younger brother and the three children of a servant. During the Late Period, adoption was the accepted method by which the virgin God's Wife of Amun obtained her successor \*(186).

"And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister: and said unto Jacob, Give me children or else I die ..... and she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her: and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her" \*(187). If a woman was barren, but her husband was known to be able to father children, one way of acquiring a child to be adopted, who was also of the husband's blood, was to present him with a concubine. So far, no direct reference to this custom has been found in Egypt, but in the second of the documents concerning the affairs of N3-nfr (see above p.352 , no.15) it is stated that two of the girls and one of the men adopted by N3-nfr were the children of a slave girl (hmt), who had been purchased by N3-nfr and her husband, Nb-nfr. It

is nowhere stated who the father of these three children was, but, since they were born after the purchase of their mother by N3-nfr and Nb-nfr, there is a strong possibility that the father was none other than Nb-nfr himself.

More information is therefore needed on the subject of adoption, but even now it is clear that a woman, even a single woman, could adopt children

#### The rights of concubines and their children.

There are remarkably few references either in official records, or in literature, to the status and rights of concubines, but this does not necessarily indicate that concubines were few in number, or that their position was considered a dishonourable one.

The sages make no reference to concubines, reserving their moral strictures against those who pursued married women. Even the dissipated young scribe was rebuked, not because his drinking and frequenting of brothels was considered a moral lapse, but because he was thus rendered unfit to perform his duties \*(188). Thus the keeping of a recognised concubine was hardly likely to be regarded with disfavour, provided of course, the wife was always treated with the respect due to her status (see above p.390 , e). Whatever his personal feelings towards her might be, a man's concubine did not play any acknowledged role in his public life, so women of this class are never specifically referred to in official documents or monuments. Further, the total lack of anything comparable to the law codes of some other ancient societies means that there is only scanty and indirect evidence concerning the social position, let alone the legal rights, of a concubine and her offspring.

That an official concubine, though not enjoying the public status accorded to a wife, could nevertheless expect honourable treatment within her lover's household, is shown by the comments and actions of Hk3-nht when he found out that his family and servants were, not treating his concubine properly ( see below p. 532).

A concubine could obviously expect adequate provisions to be made for her maintenance during the life of her lover, and there appears to have been no hindrance to her benefitting in his will, provided he had made his intentions clear in a legally constituted document. It has been established that a wife and her children had a guaranteed claim to the joint marriage fund, but it has also been suggested that a man must have had other, personal property, not included in the marriage fund, which was his to dispose of as he chose (see above p. 388), and from this he could endow a concubine and her children. When pronouncing judgement in the case of Imn-h'iw, the vizier commented, "Even if she had not been a wife, but a Syrian or a Nubian that he loved and to whom he gave his property, who should make void what he did?" \*(189), so clearly there was no bar to a concubine, even of foreign origin, to inheriting property from her lover.

Though the children of a wife must always have taken precedence over the children of a concubine, there is no indication that there was any stigma attached to being the child of such a woman \*(190), and, indeed, in the absence of a son by the wife, the son of a concubine might inherit his father's office. The supreme example of this is, of course, Tutmosis III, whose mother, 3st, was an obscure inmate of the harem of Tutmosis II.

On a less exalted plane, there is the case of the son of Hnm(w)-hṭp the second and T3t (see above p. 295). In scenes in the tomb of Hnm(w)-hṭp this boy is always shown a few paces behind the sons of Hty \*(191), but he inherited enough wealth to enable him to excavate a very respectable tomb, in which he was accorded the titles of ʔry p't h3ty- \*(192).

The Cairo Text on linen, which is a letter to a dead man \*(193), tells him how his son has been cheated of his inheritance. Pirenne suggested that the trouble arose because the boy was the son of a concubine \*(194), and he therefore had no automatic right to his father's property. Apart from the use of the word sister, ant, in the text, there is nothing to suggest that the dead man had not been married to the mother of his son, and, indeed, ant may be being used here of a wife, or as a term of endearment. The letter may equally well be used to show the vulnerability of a weak widow, who had an ineffective or dishonest trustee (see above p. 358, no.2).

Thus it can be accepted that concubinage was a recognised institution, to which no moral or social stigma was attached, and that a concubine and her children could expect honourable status and adequate provision, even though their role in the life of their protector was officially of secondary importance.

SECTION V - COSTUME AND ITS REFLECTION OF RANK AND OCCUPATION DURING  
THE MIDDLE KINGDOM.

The evidence for this study has been drawn from a variety of sources - stelae, tomb paintings and reliefs, sarcophagi, statues and statuettes, and actual grave goods, so the forms of many of these items were dictated by the strict conventions of Egyptian art. Paintings and reliefs in particular are difficult to interpret because, though they offer a wide range of examples, they were nevertheless primarily of religious significance, and they therefore tend to show people at their best and most ritually pure, so the costumes worn often represent the ideal, rather than reality. Moreover, the stylised representation of the figures and poses make it difficult to reconstruct certain garments in detail, unless the same garment can be identified on a statue sculpted in the round.

There is, however, at least one tomb of the Middle Kingdom, where the rules seem to have been relaxed a little, and that is the tomb of Wḥ-ḥtp the sixth at Meir. Concerning this tomb, Blackman noted, "An extraordinary and, as far as we can ascertain, unique feature of the paintings under discussion is the fact that all Ukhhotep's associates and attendants, i.e. the companions of his sporting and religious activities, the bringers of offerings, the persons engaged in fishing and fowling, and the musicians, vocalists, and dancers, are almost without exception women, and women further more, frequently masquerading in male clothing (see Meir vol.VI, pls.XI and XVIII), or else, like the female fowlers on the south wall, elaborately attired" \*(1)

The costumes worn by the women who are not disguised as men are unusually colourful, and often very different in style from those shown in more conventionally decorated tombs. It cannot be argued that these costumes



were unique to the region of Meir, or to the court of this particular nomarch, because, though they appear in no other tomb at Meir, there are examples of similar costumes from other parts of Egypt \*(2). I am of the opinion that, whatever the motive of Wh-htp for showing women in these uncharacteristic occupations \*(3), their costumes, when they are not disguised as men, are more accurate representations of garments worn in daily life than those in more conventionally decorated tombs.

For the purposes of the present investigations, articles of costume and jewellery have been divided into groups according to style or use, and each item is discussed individually, though some general observations about each class of object or garment may appear at the beginning of each section. Examples will be noted for every item, but these are intended to be representative of the available material, not a comprehensive list of all known examples.

To illustrate the material discussed below, I have elected to use simple figure sketches of my own (see pls.LXXXIV/CIII), rather than reproduce Egyptian originals, thus avoiding the restrictions imposed by Egyptian conventions. Examples of actual pieces of jewellery, however, are mainly illustrated by photographs, (see pls.CIV/CXVI).

### Dresses, Skirts, and Cloaks.

#### GROUP A.

The basic style of female costume of the Middle Kingdom period was virtually identical with its Old Kingdom predecessor, being a simple clinging garment, which was suspended by two broad straps, and fell from just below the breasts to just far enough above the ankles to reveal the bead anklets.

A study of the stelae and tomb paintings alone might suggest that the straps of these dresses were not wide enough to cover the breasts, but Egyptian artistic convention dictated that, in paintings and reliefs, one breast was always shown in profile and bare, e.g. pl.CV. Statues and statuettes of women wearing this type of garment however, clearly show that the straps were quite wide enough to cover the breasts, e.g. pl.CIV.

If garments of this type were made by wrapping a rectangular piece of cloth around the body, sculptors would have indicated this by representing the overlap, such as appears on statues of people wearing cloaks. There is no sign of such a fold or overlap, however, so this must have been a proper dress, with one or two side seams, but such details are omitted from all sculptures and paintings \*(4).

In both paintings and sculptures dresses are always shown as being close-fitting, clinging particularly at the waist. None of the free standing statues and statuettes ever indicate a back opening to the dresses, though without them they would be extremely difficult to get into. Nor are there any paintings or sculptures which show darts at the waist, yet without them, it would be impossible to produce the smooth, well-fitted waistline. However, since it was the custom to show the deceased as being young and slim no matter what his or her actual age or physique, it is probable that women's dresses were shown as fitting tighter than they actually did, in order to emphasise the ideally slim waist.

There is a stela in Cairo \*(5) which shows a woman bending forward in an unusual pose, causing her dress, which is painted red, to fall away from her body. Unless this is a totally separate style, it must represent a dress of Group A or B, and the artist, in his efforts to portray the figure bending forward, has been forced to show the effects of such a pose on the

clothing and has incidentally revealed that it was not as tight (see pl.LXXXIV, A.1 b) as other more conventional representations would suggest.

Another stela in Cairo \*(6) shows a dress of type C.1 similarly standing away from the body, and there is yet another example at Qau \*(7). Were it not for the fact that, in all three cases, the artist has shown the outline of the bodies beneath the dresses, it might be argued that these were special loose robes for pregnant women, but there is no sign of pregnancy in these examples.

Type A.1 (pl.LXXXIV, A.1 a/b)

This is the classical female garment of the Old and Middle Kingdoms and it was worn by all classes and conditions, and by both adults and children. It consisted of an absolutely plain dress with two broad shoulder straps, and it was made entirely of white linen.

This dress was represented so many times that the entirely false impression has arisen that Egyptians rarely wore anything other than white linen. However, the evidence is drawn from funerary monuments and it is there that the Egyptians would choose to be shown in garments of ritual purity, whatever they might have used in daily life.

**Examples:**

Examples of this particular dress are too numerous to be listed individually, but the garment appears to have been worn by women of all classes from queens to peasants. Though the style may have been common to all, the fineness of the material from which the garments were made would vary greatly from one class to another, for the Egyptians were capable of producing linen of a wide range of qualities from a very coarse grade, through to one of gauze-like fineness. Linen has been found on a Neolithic site in Egypt \*(8), and by the First Dynasty, the Egyptians were producing

extremely fine linen which had 160 threads to the inch in the warp, and 120 in the weft \*(9). Tomb paintings and statues can give no indication of the quality of the linen used to make clothes, but it may be safely assumed that every garment would be made of a quality of linen that directly reflected the social class of the wearer. The only exception to this rule may have been mourning clothes, for distinctive colours and coarse quality of materials are often among the recognised formal expressions of grief \*(10).

Linen of various qualities has been found in numerous graves dated to the Middle Kingdom, and some of it was so woven as to produce a raised, tufted pattern on the cloth, rather like modern towelling \*(11), while other pieces have fringes \*(12). Neither of these features ever appear in tomb paintings of the time, which again suggests that these representations, at least in regard to fashion, may have been stylised to the point of inaccuracy.

Type A.2 (pl.LXXXIV, A.2 a/b)

This is exactly the same dress as Type A.1, but in this case it is made wholly or in part of coloured cloth. Lucas \*(13) noted that the Egyptians used vegetable products to dye cloth and that the colours most usually produced included blue, brown, green, yellow and various shades of red, but the impression persists that they dressed almost exclusively in white, an impression based on several misleading pieces of evidence.

Attention has already been drawn to the fact that most of the available evidence concerning Egyptian costume comes from tombs, and that the scenes shown there all had religious significance, so, though people were often shown performing actions of daily life, they were portrayed dressed in clean white linen as a sign of ritual purity. It should be remembered that, though the Pharaoh was most usually shown wearing white linen, he too was occasional

portrayed in multi-coloured garments \*(14), and the robes found in the tomb of Tutankhamun \*(15) were not only of coloured lines, but were also heavily embroidered, a feature which is entirely omitted from all tomb paintings.

Stelae and painted statues are another important source of information concerning fashion, especially because, on statues and statuettes, conventions concerning colour and style were not always so rigidly observed.

Unfortunately, however, in many cases, the paint has entirely disappeared. The present condition of stelae can be even more misleading than that of statues, because so many stelae are made of white limestone. During the course of time, the pale colours often used for female dresses have faded or been worn away, leaving the surface of the white limestone, which appears to represent white dresses, while traces of the dark pigments used for hair and flesh tints are still visible, re-inforcing the illusion of white garments. Close scrutiny of individual stelae, however, often reveal minute traces of paint on the dresses, which are not evident to the casual observer, and which never show up in black and white photographs.

Finally, much of the linen which has survived from the Middle Kingdom is undoubtedly white in colour, but this linen was either used for bandages, or was intended for bedding or other domestic purposes, and was not destined for the manufacture of garments at all.

The technique of dyeing must have been discovered at a very early date, since some fragments of yellow cloth have survived from the Badarian Period \*(16). Women are shown wearing coloured dresses in numerous Old Kingdom tombs, and coloured cloths are regularly included in the more comprehensive lists of offerings.

Some scraps of cloth in the collection of Mr. Horace L. Mayer were found

in the pyramid of Unas, and they have coloured stripes along the selvage. One piece has four blue stripes of varying widths, while the other has two blue and two pink \*(17) stripes, and a blue fringe.

Though coloured cloths, both patterned and plain, were available from a very early period, it is now impossible to assess what percentage of garments were made in them.

Examples:

Cairo stelae 20400, 20549, 20561.

Cairo stela (Journal d'Entrée 36420) shows the two wives of the owner dressed in dark red and green respectively.

British Museum stela, vol.II, pl.12, no.138.

British Museum stela, vol.IV, pl.44.

Meir, vol.VI, pls.X, XI, XII, XIII, XV, XVII, XVIII and XIX.

The women in these scenes wear a medley of greens, blues, reds and yellows. There are also instances of white dresses with green straps, and green dresses with red straps. Those wearing these gay garments include the female relatives of the provincial governors, priestesses, and servants.

The statuette of hmt nsw '33yt, which was found in her grave, shows her wearing a red dress with white straps. See the Egyptian Expedition 1920/21, The Excavations at Thebes, Part II of the B.M.M.A. for November 1921, fig.26.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XII. The wife of the owner of the tomb has a dress with coloured stripes.

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pl.56b. The dress is of a plain coloured material, and the straps, the band under the breasts, and the band round the hem are white, outlined in a dark material (see pl.LXXXIV, A.2 b). Type A.3 (pls.LXXXIV/LXXXV, A.3 a/j)

This is essentially the same garment as A.1, but in this version the

straps are either patterned in several colours and intricate designs, or they are of the same material as the rest of the dress, but are knotted, or cut in ornamental shapes.

Examples:

Antefokar. As might be expected in a tomb which had been adapted for the use of a woman, more attention than usual was paid to the details of feminine attire. Pls.XIV, XX, XXIII, XXV, XXXI and XXXIX show that Snt favoured dresses made of plain material, but with elaborately patterned straps, e.g. pl.LXXXV, nos.A.3 d/j)

British Museum stelae, vol.II, pl.4, no.189 and vol.III, pl.32, no.250.

Beni Hasan, vol.II, pls.XVI and XXIV. These are worn by the wives of the local governors. One dress has a coloured band under the breasts, while the other has knotted straps (see pl.LXXXIV, no.A.3 b).

Florence stelae nos.6368, 6385 and 6374 and Cairo stela 20010. These four stelae show women wearing dresses with decoratively cut straps (see pl.LXXXV, nos.A.3 c) and they are all to be dated to the First Intermediate Period or the Eleventh Dynasty. The style then appears to have fallen out of favour.

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.I, pl.48, no.231. Statuette of a woman wearing a pale green dress. The straps are green and white and there are bands of black and white patterned material edging the straps, the top of the dress and the hem (see pl.LXXXV, no.A.3 j).

Cairo stelae 20105 and 20138. These both show women in dresses with patterned straps, but in both cases it is difficult to decide whether these garments have one strap or two.

Type A.4 (pls.LXXXV/LXXXVII, A.4 a/d)

This also is essentially the same garment as A.1., but dresses of this group are heavily patterned in several colours, or covered all over with beads.

Type A.4 a: This group is comprised of those dresses which appear to have been decorated with beads, which were either sewn directly on to the dress, or were threaded together to form a separate, net-like overdress \*(18). The most popular designs were of floral or diamond-shaped motifs which were repeated at regular intervals. There are Old Kingdom precedents for these designs.

Statuettes of the Middle Kingdom show beaded dresses being worn by certain, favoured servants, but the intricacies of manufacture, possibly, in some cases, combined with the use of beads made of precious metals and semi-precious stones, probably meant that such garments were only available to the rich, or to favoured concubines. Certainly in the New Kingdom and after, only queens and goddesses are depicted in such garments.

**Examples:**

A stela in Cairo (Journal d'Entrée 45625) shows the wife of the owner in a white dress with green straps. The body of the garment is patterned with a floral design, the petals being green and the linking beads being red (pl.LXXXV, A.4 aI).

Offering bearer from the tomb of Mkt-R<sup>i</sup>. Winlock, Models of Daily Life in Ancient Egypt, pl.30. The figure on the left wears a white dress covered with a zig-zag pattern of red and green beads (pl.LXXXV, A.4 aII).

An unpublished stela in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, E.55.14.

Hayes, The Sceptre of Egypt, vol.I, fig.218. The wife of the owner



of this stela wears a white dress, covered with a zig-zag pattern of red and green beads (pl.LXXXV, A.4 aIII).

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XVIII. The wife of the local prince wears a dress covered with beads in a floral design. The straps are also patterned (pl.LXXXVI, A.4 aIV).

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XII. The wife of the monarch has a beaded dress of a floral design (pl.LXXXVI, A.4 aV).

Petrie, Koptos, pl.X. This scene shows Senusret I before the goddess Bast. She is wearing a dress which is covered with an elaborate diamond pattern. The pattern may have been made of beads or it may have been woven into the cloth (pl.LXXXVI, A.4 aVI).

Type A.4 b: This group is composed of those dresses that were covered with feathers, or designs resembling feathers. Some of the reliefs and paintings showing this design clearly are intended to represent real feathers (see pl.LXXXVI, A.4 bI), presumably symbolic of the protecting wings of the various goddesses, but there has been some dispute as to whether or not the Egyptians attached real feathers to such garments, after the fashion of some of the later South American Indian tribes. Petrie and Cotteville-Giraudet believed real feathers were used, but Erman and Steindorff disagreed. In view of the fact the actual cloth has been found with real feathers sewn on to it \*(19), it seems probable that the Egyptians did use real feathers in the manufacture of certain rich, possibly ritual garments (pb.LXXXVI, A.4 bII), but that there were also cheaper imitations of the design, made by sewing pieces of coloured cloth in regular rows on to the body of a dress (pl.LXXXVI, A.4 bIII).

#### Examples:

Naville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.II, pl.XX. The feather pattern in this case is actually on a dress of Type C.3, and it is being

worn by one of the inmates of the harem of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep (see below p.422 ).

Cotteville-Giraudet, Rapport sur les fouilles de Médamoud (1931), ps.29/30 and pls.III and XIX. The god Montu is shown wearing a feathered corselet.

Petrie, Koptos, pl.X. This relief shows the goddess Nekhbet in a feathered dress. She has wings wrapped around her body as on the famous statue of Queen Karomama (Louvre, inv. no. N.500), where the feathers are reproduced in very great detail and are clearly of an entirely different texture from the draperies underneath.

Mond and Myers, The Temples of Armant, pl.XCVI, no.1. Another goddess in a feather-covered dress.

Winlock, Models of Daily Life in Ancient Egypt, pl.30, the figure on the right. In this case there can be no doubt that the servant girl is wearing a dress decorated with rows of blue, red, green and yellow material cut in scallops.

Type A.4 c: Dresses might also be made of material patterned with multi-coloured stripes of geometric designs (see pl.LXXXVI, A.4 cI/II.

#### Examples:

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XIII. The woman is wearing a dress with stripes of red, green and blue on a white ground.

An unpublished wooden statuette in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (no.E.201.1939), shows a woman wearing a dress of red, white, black, green and blue checks.

Petrie, Abydos, vol.I, pl.LXX, and Evers, Staat aus dem Stein, vol.I, p.51. This headless statue, dated to the Middle Kingdom, deserves special

consideration. The straps of the dress are patterned (see pl.LXXXVI, A.4 cIII) and there are three horizontal lines under the breasts and three more at the hem, probably representing decorative coloured stripes, though if they were ever painted, all traces have now disappeared. Besides these, there are also groups of vertical lines, five in each, spaced at regular intervals round the dress. These vertical lines may represent stripes of colour, woven into the material, or they may represent pleats in the linen as in Type A.4 d.

Type A.4 d: Pleated linen is more usually associated with the fashions of the New Kingdom, but it was actually used at least as early as the early Old Kingdom, in the manufacture of men's kilts. During the Middle Kingdom, no tomb paintings shows women wearing pleated linen, though men still have pleated kilts, and might also wear pleated cloaks \*(20). There is, however, evidence to suggest that women did use pleated linen.

#### Examples:

Pieces of pleated linen were found in the tomb of Queen Nfrw of the Eleventh Dynasty (no.319 at Deir el Bahari). Winlock, Excavations at Deir el Bahri, pl.36.

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, fig.25 \*(21). This photograph shows a piece of linen pleated in exactly the pattern shown on the statue found by Petrie (see above, p.415 , Type A.4 c).

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, frontispiece. This shows the anthropoid coffin of Snbtsy, which is decorated with vertical lines, similar to those on the Petrie statue, that must, in this context, represent pleats or folds in the bandage or shroud.

Actual garments made of pleated linen have been found in graves, dated between the First Intermediate Period and the early Middle Kingdom, by Reisner at Naga-ed-Dér \*(22) and Chassinat at Assiut \*(23). These garments

were pleated horizontally, not vertically, and they had sleeves (see pl. LXXXVII, A.4 d). It must have been virtually impossible to hold the horizontal pleats in position for any length of time, and they must have been uncomfortable to wear, besides being aesthetically unpleasing \*(24).

#### GROUP B

The dresses belonging to this group are essentially the same as those of Group A, except that these have only one broad strap instead of two. Tomb paintings and stelae do not always make clear whether some dresses have one strap or two, but there are enough examples on statuettes to show that this is definitely a separate style and not merely a careless representation of Group A.

#### Type B.1 a (pl.LXXXVII, B.1 a)

This is exactly the same plain linen dress as Type A.1, except that it has only one strap, thus leaving one breast bare.

#### Examples:

Engelbach, Riqqeh and Memphis VI, pl.XXVII.

J.E.A., 1965, vol.LI, pl.XX, no.2.

Cairo stelae 20234, 20400 and 20754.

Some probable examples occur among the ladies of the families of the princes of Beni Hasan, el Bersheh and Meir, and some may be definitely identified being worn by various groups of their servants:

el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.XXVI - worn by weavers.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XII, XXIX and XXXV - worn by weavers, musicians, singers and a w'rtyt and her daughters.

Beni Hasan, vol.II, pls.VII and XVI - worn by musicians, singers and a nurse.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.V - worn by serving women.

Antefokar, pl.XV - worn by singers.

Type B.1 b (pl.LXXXVII, B.1 b)

This is the same dress as B.1 a, except that, instead of being ankle length, it terminates at the knee. It appears to have been worn exclusively by servants, and it was obviously a practical garment to work in.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXIX - worn by women preparing thread for spinning.

Beni Hasan, vol.II, pl.IV - worn by women weaving.

el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.XXVI - worn by women spinning.

Antefokar, pls.XII and XV - worn by women preparing dough.

British Museum no.30719 - worn by a woman working in a kitchen in a tomb model.

Type B.2 (pl.LXXXVIII, B.2 a/b)

This is basically the same dress as B.1, except that the single strap is fastened with an elaborate knot.

Examples:

Meir, vol.II, pl.VI - worn by the wife of the local prince (pl.LXXXVII, B.2 a).

Meir, vol.II, pl.XV - worn by three priestesses of Hathor (pl.LXXXVIII, B.2 b).

Type B.3 (pl.LXXXVIII, B.3 a/b)

In this variations of the basic B.1 type, the single strap covers one breast, passes diagonally across the chest and over the opposite shoulder.

Examples:

Servants in a painting from tomb 22 at Gebelein, which is now in

the Turin Museum. These dresses are painted either plain white or black.

Cairo stela 20747.

Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et métiers, les usages de la vie civile et domestique des anciens peuples de l'Égypte, de la Nubie, et de l'Éthiopie*, pl.XVa - worn by servant girls who are making perfume. This scene appeared in a tomb at Beni Hasan, but has been destroyed since Cailliaud's day.

Type B.4 (pl.LXXXVIII, B.4 a/e)

This again is essentially the same dress as B.1, but in this version the single strap is cut from the same piece of material as the body of the garment, whereas in type B.1 the strap appears to have been a separate piece of cloth, sewn to the body of the dress.

According to the width of material cut to form the strap, one or both breasts could be covered, or they could both be bare.

**Examples:**

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pl.53a; pl.54b, where the dress is only knee length; pl.57, the two figures on the left.

Chassinat and Palanque, *Une Campagne de fouilles dans la nécropole d'Assiout*, pl.IV, which shows a girl wearing a bead apron (see pl.CII, G2) over a dress of type B.4 a; also pls.IX and X, which show two servant girls in dresses which have bold red and blue patterns on the skirt.

Type B.5

These dresses are of the same style as type 1, but these are wholly or partly made of coloured cloth.

**Examples:**

Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, vol.I, fig.219. The wife of the owner wears a green dress.

Antefokar, pl.XXIIIA. The singers in this scene wear white dresses, each with a blue band under the breasts.

Beni Hasan, vol.II, pl.XXIX. This dress also has a coloured band under the breasts.

### GROUP C

This group includes all those dresses that are suspended by one or two straps of such narrow dimensions that both breasts are left virtually bare. It may not always be clear on stelae and in tomb paintings when such dresses are being shown, but there is no doubt in the case of statuettes. An examination of the dates of the various examples shows that, though the narrow-strapped dress may have enjoyed great popularity among the ladies of the court of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep, it fell out of favour with the upper classes during the Twelfth Dynasty, though it continued to be in vogue among the servants.

Unlike groups A and B, no example of group C can be definitely identified before the First Intermediate Period.

#### Type C.1 (pl.LXXXIX, C.1)

This dress reaches from just below the breasts to just above the ankles. It is suspended by a single strap which extends from the centre front, over one shoulder to the back of the garment.

#### Examples:

Cairo stela 20234.

Beni Hasan vol.I, pl.XXXV. It is worn here by a ḥtt nt 't ḥnkt (see above p. 319).

British Museum stela, vol.I, pl.53. It is worn by the wife of the owner, and there is a band under the breasts which may once have been coloured

British Museum statuettes 45074 and 45075.

M.D.I.K., vol.IV, 1933, p.187. The dresses worn by the wife and daughters of the owner are of Type C.1. and are made of patterned cloth (see pl.LXXXVI, A.4 cII).

Type C.2 (pl.LXXXIX, C.2 a/c)

This dress falls from just below the breasts to just above the ankles, and it is suspended by two narrow straps, which are sewn to the centre of the front, and then pass over the shoulders and are attached to the back of the garment. In some versions the two straps appear to have met in the middle (pl.LXXXIX, C.2 a), though they were not necessarily sewn together, while in other versions the two straps did not quite meet (pl.LXXXIX, C.2 c). In most cases, the top of the garment is shown as being cut straight, though there are some examples where the top of the dress falls away from the straps as if it fitted more loosely than the other version (pl.LXXXIX, C.2 b).

Examples:

The Egyptian Expedition 1933/34, Excavations at Lisht, Section II of the B.M.M.A. for November 1934, fig.29. The figure on the far right has a dress of type C.2, which is made of a patterned material (see pl.LXXXVI, A.4 cI), while the second figure from the right has a dress decorated with a scallop pattern.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXV. The dress here is plain and it is worn by a htt pr (see above p.318).

Mogensen, La Glyptothèque ny Carlsberg, pl.XII, no.A51, AE.I.N.670. It is worn by a servant.

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pls.54a and 56a. These are two offering bearers. The first is dressed in white, the second in green.



Also pl.60. This dress has an elaborate scallop pattern over it, and a patterned band under the breasts and at the hem, (see pl.LXXXIX, C.2 c).

Eten College Collection no.33 - a servant statuette.

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.II, pl.80, no.484.

Naville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.I, pl.IX. Statuette of a servant wearing a pale green dress (British Museum no. 41673).

Type C.3 (pl.LXXXIX, C.3 a/d)

In this version, the dress, which falls from under the breasts to just above the ankles, is suspended by two narrow straps, which do not meet in the front of the dress, but pass straight over the shoulders. The straps are so narrow that, though they are usually represented as covering the nipples, they would never have stayed in this position once the woman began to move.

Examples:

Cairo stela 20615.

Naville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.II, pl.XX. This dress is worn by one of the inmates of the harem of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep. In this particular version the straps are white and the body of the dress is green. From under the breasts to just below the knee the dress is covered with a pattern of feathers (pl.LXXXIX, C.3 e), but it is not clear whether these were real feathers or cloth substitutes.

The Egyptian Expedition 1933/34, Excavations at Lisht, Section II of the B.M.M.A. for November 1934, fig.29, the figure on the far left. The dress is covered with a scallop pattern, and has patterned straps, which are held in place by a third strip of cloth which stretches between them and acts as a brace (see pl.LXXXIX, C.3 b).

A statuette in the British Museum (no.20867) is clothed in a white dress, but the straps and the bands under the breasts and at the hem are patterned. The straps pass round the outside of the breasts and the nipples are thus left exposed (pl.LXXXIX, C.3 d). All white versions of this dress are also known from statuettes of offering bearers, see Michalowski, The Art of Ancient Egypt, pl.79.

Type C.4 (pl.XC, C.4 a/c)

This garment closely resembles type C.3, but this version only covers the body from the waist (see pl.XC, C.4 a), or just above it (see pl.XC, C.4 b), and is suspended by two narrow straps.

Examples:

Cairo stela 20501.

Steindorff, Grabfunde des Mittleren Reichs in den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin, Das Grab des Mentuhotep, pl.XI, nos.1 and 2. One servant girl is wearing a dress with a pattern in blue, red and green scallops (pl.XC, C.4 c), while the other has a plain white dress.

Chassinat and Palanque, Une Campagne de fouilles dans la nécropole d'Assiout, pl.XXXV.

Naville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.II, pls.XIII and XVI show S3dh and '3šyt in green dresses of this style and pl.XVII shows '3šyt in a white version.

GROUP D (pl.XC, D)

The garments of this group are apparently proper dresses, which do not have straps, but bodices with a round-cut neckline. Illustrations of this type of garment are very rare.

Examples:

Cairo stela 20013.

Turin Museum. Painting from the tomb of Ṭpi at Gebelein. The dresses are white and are worn by the wife and female servants of the owner.

Lacau, Sarcophages, pl.VI, coffin 28116. Here the white dresses are worn by Isis and Nephthys,

GROUP E (pl.XC, E)

This garment falls from just below the breasts to just above the ankles. It has no straps and the breasts are left completely bare. None of the available examples of this dress, which can be dated to the Middle Kingdom, give any indication as to how it was made, but the right effect can be obtained if a rectangular piece of material is wrapped around the body and the end is tucked in the top.

Some tomb paintings illustrating this garment show a band under the breasts, which may represent a separate piece of linen or tapes attached to the top of the dress \*(25), and in either case, the effect would be to secure the garment in place \*(26).

It is unlikely that the dress would fit as closely to the waist as those shown in the tomb paintings, but, as with other styles, this feature may well have been exaggerated to flatter the figure of the deceased, presenting a representation of the ideal, rather than the actual figure and garment.

Examples:

British Museum stelae, vol.I, pl.51. Here it is worn by a peasant woman bearing offerings.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XX and XXXV. The garment is worn by a htt pr.

Naville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.III, pl.III. The dress is worn by Kmsit and by her maids.

J.N.E.S., vol.XV, 1956, pls.XI and XII. These reliefs show the dress being worn by offering bearers and singers in the tomb of the King's Wife Nfrw.

The Museum Year 1972/3. The 79th Annual Report of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, p.50, offering bearers in the tomb of Nfrw.

Antefokar. pls.III, XII, XVIII, XIX, and XXIII. Here the dress is worn by women gleaning, making bread and serving Snt, but it also appears to have been worn by the priestesses playing the roles of the two Kites, and by those representing the Souls of Pe and Dep.

#### GROUP F

This group includes the wide variety of kilts and skirts which were popular in ancient Egypt.

Types 1 and 2 appear to have been worn only by peasants and servants, particularly those engaged in strenuous physical labour such as dancing, housework and farm work, but type 3 is also to be found worn by priestesses in funeral processions, in tombs dated between the Old Kingdom and the Ramesside Period, and possibly as late as the Graeco-Roman era as well. I am of the opinion that this style of skirt was the first linen garment worn by Egyptian women \*(27), probably replacing an even earlier version made of animal pelts or leather. It was certainly a fashion of venerable antiquity, and as such would be an appropriate garment for use at funerals.

#### Type F.1 (pl.XCI, F.1 a/c)

This is a short kilt, reaching only from waist to thigh. It was presumably simply a length of cloth wrapped round the body, with the ends

tucked in at the waist or knotted. According to how it was draped and fastened, the hem might be straight or sloped up in any direction. The rest of the body was left completely bare.

**Examples:**

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XII, XIII and XXIX and vol.II, pl.VI. This kilt is shown worn by women grinding corn, baking bread, cooking, spinning and dancing.

Antaeopolis, pl.XXIV. The acrobats wear short kilts made of brightly patterned material.

Antefokar, pls.III, XV and XXIV. Women winnowing and dancers wear short kilts.

Type F.2 (pl.XCI, F.2 a/b)

This skirt reaches from the waist to the top of the knee. In many illustrations a waistband is shown, knotted at the back.

**Examples:**

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXIX, and vol.II, pls.VII and XVII. In these scenes the skirts are worn by dancers, musicians, and possibly a female overseer of weavers \*(28).

el Bersheh, vol.II, pl.XIV. Here the skirts are worn by women dancing.

Antefokar, pl.III. This shows women winnowing.

The Egyptian Expedition 1930/31, Excavations at Thebes, Section II of B.M.M.A. for March 1932, fig.26. This scene from the tomb of D3r, shows women making bread and beer.

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pl.37 b, shows a woman making beer.

Type F.3 (pl.XCI, F.3 a/b)

This skirt reaches from the waist to just above the ankle, and it is usually shown with a plain waistband, sometimes with a tie at the back.

Examples:

British Museum stela, vol.I, pl.52 - worn by the wife of the owner.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXIX - worn by a woman gleaning.

Neville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.III, pl.III - worn by maids bringing offerings to Kmsît.

Antefokar, pl.XXI - worn by the Kites.

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pl.57. The servant on the far right is wearing a white skirt. Her limbs are painted a darker colour than is usual for Egyptian women, so this may represent a Nubian.

Type F.4 (pl.XCI, F.4)

Skirts of this type fall from the hips to just above the ankles. The examples quoted below are of skirts made of plain white linen, but they resemble the skirts worn by Nubian women (see below p.428 , Type G.3).

Examples:

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.II, pl.82, no.493.

GROUP G

This group includes the dresses worn by foreign women in Egypt.

Type G.1 (pl.XCII, G.1)

Aamu women appear to have favoured dresses made of elaborately and brightly patterned cloths, made up into two particular styles. The more popular version of the Aamu dress covered both breasts, but left one shoulder bare, while the other was a simple round-necked dress, resembling the Egyptian Type D (see pl.XC). On their feet, Aamu women seem to have worn

small, ankle-length boots.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXI.

Type G.2 (pl.XCII, G.2)

The Libyan women shown in the tombs at Beni Hasan wear skirts which reach from the waist to just above the ankle. There is a fold of material around the hips, as if the cloth has been turned back from the waist, while the bottom of the skirt is uneven. This feature is either to indicate that the bottom is cut in a scalloped pattern, or to show that the skirt was very full and is falling in pleats.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XIII and XLV. The garments in this scene are all red-brown in colour.

Royal Scottish Museum no.1911.260 (see Garstang, Burial Customs of Ancient Egypt, fig.138). This wooden statuette from Beni Hasan is of a woman, apparently a Libyan, clad in an ankle length skirt, with her child wrapped in her shawl, which is draped round her shoulders and crossed over her breasts. The clothes are red-brown in colour.

Type G.3 (pl.XCII, G.3)

The costumes of Nubian women, as recorded by the Egyptians, was a skirt usually of patterned cloth, which reached from the hips to just above the ankles. Nubian women wearing similar garments are to be seen in tombs at Thebes of New Kingdom date \*(29).

Examples:

Winlock, Excavations at Deir el Bahari, p.129/30 and pl.34. One of these statuettes wears a skirt that is patterned all over, while the

other has a skirt that is patterned only on the upper third of the garment. Both patterns recall those on the so-called "paddle dolls", which, it has been suggested, represent Nubian girls \*(30).

#### GROUP H

Egypt enjoys an extremely agreeable climate, but during the winter months, especially in the Northern part of the country, there is need for a warmer covering than a simple linen kilt or tunic.

There is no evidence to be found among the paintings and statuettes of the Middle Kingdom to suggest that women had any dresses specially designed for winter use, though garments of this type may have been in use in the New Kingdom, for some Theban tombs of that date show girls in dresses with round necks and elbow length sleeves \*(31). These garments probably resemble in style the long-sleeved tunics found in the tomb of Tutankhamun \*(32).

The cooler days of winter, and the noticeable drop in temperature at sunset, would encourage the use of cloaks made of warmer material than linen. However, woollen cloth is rarely found in graves before the Christian era \*(33). The Egyptians are known to have kept sheep from the earliest times and it would be strange if so ingenious a people failed to take advantage of such a useful yarn as wool, when it was readily available. Herodotus \*(34) said that the priests wore nothing but linen, which might be taken to imply that the rest of the population wore other threads as well. If this was so, and wool was considered to be impure for certain people, occasions, or places then this might have caused it to be omitted from most graves.

Leather would also provide a wind-proof material for the manufacture of cloaks, but there is little evidence for its use in clothes outside of Nubia, except in the Predynastic Period \*(35).



Admittedly some tombs do show noblemen on hunting expeditions wearing garment that were probably made of dyed leather \*(36), still, there is no evidence to suggest that women ever wore leather, except as sandals. Even if wool and leather were not used at all in garments, warm clothing could be obtained by the use of a heavy quality linen, especially if several layers were quilted together.

Type H.1 (pl.XCII, H.1 a/b)

A limited number of pieces of funeral furniture, all to be dated to the Eleventh Dynasty, have decorations showing women wearing a cloak so short, that it might perhaps be more accurately described as a shawl. Indeed, the artist has shown the garment as so abbreviated that it must have been decorative rather than practical in character, but this may be distortion due to the exigencies of artistic conventions.

In these examples, the cloth is draped at the back only to the waist, while the ends are brought over the shoulders and are left resting on the breast. In order to prevent the cloak or shawl from falling off, the ends must have been secured in some way. Brooches could have been attached to the dress satisfactorily, but there is no evidence that the Egyptians used brooches before the Greek era \*(37). Long pins might also have served to hold the ends in place, but the only pins found in Egyptian graves are long hair pins, usually made of ivory or wood, which are too blunt and too thick to be pushed through cloth \*(38). It must therefore be assumed that the ends of the cloth were tied in order to hold the cloak or shawl in place, and certainly one of the available Eleventh Dynasty examples shows the two ends of the garment meeting on the breast (see pl.XCII, H.1 a). This would be in keeping with the evidence of New Kingdom paintings and statuary which show

robes loosely knotted across the chest.

**Examples:**

Naville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.II, pls XVII and XX. The former shows '3šyt in a white dress with the short cloak or shawl made of blue-grey material, while the latter portrays Kmsit in an even shorter wrap of green lined with yellow.

Since the representations of these particular garments are unknown elsewhere in Egypt, it may be that they enjoyed limited popularity at the courts of the monarchs of the Eleventh Dynasty, but actual shawls appear to have been found amongst the quantities of household linen placed in graves of the Middle Kingdom period. When describing the unwrapping of the mummy of W3h \*(39), Winlock recorded that, ".... the outermost piece of linen was a shawl, wrapped kilt-like about the mummy, with its fringed edge around his waist tucked in front". This garment is now pink in colour, but may originally have been red. Among the rest of the linen in the tomb of W3h was another fringed shawl 256 cms. long \*(40), and in the tomb of Snbtisy there were four shawls with fringed edges, which had been folded and placed on top of the coffin \*(41).

Type H.2 (pl.XCIII, H.2)

This long cloak could be worn over a dress, thus giving additional warmth, but since it completely enveloped the body it could equally well be worn alone. It is simple to reproduce this garment since all this is required is a large rectangular piece of cloth. To obtain the correct effect the material must be the same measurement in depth as the length of the wearer's body from under the arm to the ankle.

To don the garment, one end is held by the right hand under the right arm-pit, and the material is allowed to fall behind the body. The material is then picked up by the left hand, pulled tightly across the back, and brought up under the left arm-pit, across the chest, then under the right arm-pit again. The body is now completely covered and once the material has been pulled tightly, it need not be held by the right hand any longer. Added security may be gained by tucking some of the spare material into that which is already wrapped round the body. To complete the garment, the material is taken across the back a second time, and what remains is gathered up and passed over the left shoulder.

The cloak is now perfectly secure and the wearer can move freely, though the freedom of the left arm may be somewhat restricted. This can be overcome if the remaining end of the cloth is tucked into the breast.

This type of cloak was also known in the Old Kingdom, and there is a statue of that date in Cairo (Journal d'Entrée 48828), clearly showing the cloak being worn over a dress.

#### Examples:

Winlock, "An Egyptian Statuette from Asia Minor", B.M.M.A. 1921, vol.XVI, ps.209/210. This statuette of the nurse Sjt-Snfrw was found at Adana, and it is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 18.2.2.

#### Type H.3 (pl.XCIII, H.3)

To make this cloak a rectangular piece of material is required, but it does not have to be as large as the piece needed to make the preceding cloak. To produce the correct results, one end of the material is held in the right hand under the right arm-pit and the rest is taken round the back of the body. The end of the material is passed over the left shoulder, across the

breasts, and is then tied to the corner held by the right hand. As with type H.2, this may slightly restrict the movements of the left arm, but inconvenience is reduced to a minimum by the use of soft material which will fall into natural pleats as the left arm bends.

This style of cloak leaves the front of the body exposed, so it had to be worn over a dress. If the material was long enough the edges might be held together across the body for added protection, but it would never be as warm or practical a garment as type H.2.

Though no representations of this cloak can be dated earlier than the Middle Kingdom, the style is such a simple one that it may well have been in use from an early date. It was evidently the proto-type of the pleated over-garments so fashionable in the New Kingdom and after.

#### Examples:

Meir, vol.VI, pls. X and XIII. Representations of this cloak are rare, and it is only in the tomb of Wn-htp the sixth at Meir that good examples may be found. The ladies of his court appear to have worn these cloaks, made of white or coloured linen, over dresses which might also be white or coloured.

#### Type H.4 (pl.XCIII, H.4)

In addition to the three types of cloak discussed so far, none of which would make a truly effective protection against the elements, paintings and statues of the Middle Kingdom show that the Egyptians also made large cloaks, which enveloped the body completely from neck to feet.

One version of this cloak was the shroud-like garment, which is shown on figures of deities such as Osiris and Ptah, and it was apparently worn by pilgrims journeying to Abydos, though it is often difficult to decide whether such scenes are a factual record of a journey that had taken place, or an

account of a symbolic voyage after death.

Artistic conventions make it very difficult to decide on the evidence available from tomb paintings, how this cloak was wrapped round the body, but fortunately a similar garment was popular amongst the officials and dignitaries of the Middle Kingdom, so details may be learnt from their statues \*(42). There are no statues dating from the Middle Kingdom \*(43) of women wearing these large, possibly ceremonial cloaks, but presumably, in cold weather, they would envelope themselves in a similar garment. To make this cloak a large rectangular piece of material is required. The most convincing results are obtained if the wearer holds one corner of the material in the left hand against the right shoulder. The material is passed across the front of the body from right to left, and around the left side of the body, imprisoning the left arm in the process. The material is then brought across the back and over the right shoulder to the front, allowing the edge to hang down the centre of the body. It is possible that, for added warmth, the material might be passed round the body more than once. Whichever method was used, the movement of the left arm would be very restricted, but this is not too serious a disadvantage in garments made for warmth, or in formal dress, as may be seen from the Roman toga, which similarly impeded the movement of one arm.

Examples:

Antef kar. pl.XVII. The large, shroud-like cloak is shown being worn by Snt on her journey to Abydos.

Cairo stela 20331. The woman here is the wife of the owner and she is shown sitting before her offerings.

GROUP I (pl.XCIV, I a/b)

The heat of the Egyptian summer is such that clothes are unnecessary

to give warmth, though an all-enveloping robe may be regarded as a useful protection against the drying effects of the sun's rays. All the evidence from tombs of all periods indicates that the ancient Egyptians preferred to reduce clothing to an absolute minimum when working, relying on their oil and grease-based cosmetics to compensate for the drying effects of the sun, and it seems likely that they allowed the children of both sexes to go naked when weather and the occasion permitted.

No tomb paintings represent women of the middle or upper classes in the nude, but in the privacy of their apartments they may very well have removed all, or most, of their clothes during the heat of the day.

The paintings and reliefs in the tombs of the noblemen of the Middle Kingdom do not include those scenes showing nude servant-girls waiting on guests at banquets, which appear to have been popular during the New Kingdom. However, this does not mean that nudity was socially unacceptable during the earlier period for nude female figurines made of wood or faience were regularly included among the grave goods during the Middle Kingdom. Since it was customary to represent the owner and his family, whether in paintings or in groups of statuary, as clothed, most of the nude female figurines and small statues are likely to represent servants. Such statuettes are not true portraits, and they are only very rarely inscribed, so it is uncertain whether they were intended to represent individual women, possibly an inmate of the harem of the owner of the tomb, or whether they were symbolic representations of the women to be found in all affluent households, whose services, sexual and otherwise, might be needed by their master, both in this world and the next.

The faience figurines of girls, both dressed and undressed, which often terminate at the knee, have been called "dolls", a designation which seemed

justified by the discovery of four such figures in the tomb of the girl Hpy at Idsht \*(44). However, the burial of Hpy was intrusive and the "dolls" may have belonged to the man who had previously owned the tomb. Moreover, it is difficult to believe that a similar figure found in the tomb of the bowman Nfr-htp is to be classed as a toy \*(45).

Though they are shown naked, the women represented by these figures of wood and faience are often shown wearing a good deal of jewellery. Girdles appear to have been particularly popular (see below p.463, Group G), and several figures, besides necklaces, also have long strings of beads passing round the body from neck to hip \*(46).

Some of these figurines, particularly the faience ones, represent the girls as being tattooed. These tattoos are usually diamond-shaped groups of dots (see pl.XCIV, I a), which cover the lower half of the trunk and the legs (see pl.XCIV, I b). During the course of their excavations at Deir el Bahari the members of the expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art found the mummies of several girls whose limbs bore tattoos similar to those on the faience figurines, and Dr.Derry, who examined the bodies, suggested that the young women may have been of Nubian origin \*(47).

There are so many figures of nude women, portrayed in a variety of styles and materials \*(48), that only a small selection has been included here.

#### Examples:

The Egyptian Expedition 1922/23, Excavations at Thebes, Part II of the B.M.M.A. for December 1923, fig.15.

The Egyptian Expedition 1933/34, Excavations at Lisht, Section II of the B.M.M.A. for November 1934, fig.29, the second figure from the left.

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pls.84, 85, and 90b.

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.I, pl.46, no.223, pl.47, nos.225 and 228, and pl.49, no.234.

B.I.F.A.O., 1953, vol.LIII, pl.I.

J.E.A., 1929, vol.XV, pl.IX.

British Museum stela, vol.I, pl.56 shows naked children.

Antefokar, pl.XXIIIA shows a small, naked boy taking part in a religious procession.

#### GROUP J (pl.XCIV, J a/c)

Groups A to I represent the more conventional female fashions of the Middle Kingdom, but Groups J and K include unusual styles, or unusual variations of known styles.

Group J includes skirts which are worn with some covering over the breasts, instead of leaving the breasts bare, as was usual with skirts of Group F. The skirts of Group J are made by wrapping a rectangular piece of linen round the body and knotting the ends in the front of the body. The material was not large enough to produce an overlap, so a slit was left, exposing one leg. This would allow the maximum freedom of movement, which is presumably why all the examples of this garment are shown being worn by dancers. The skirts vary from knee-length to ankle length (see pl.XCIV, J a and c).

In some instances the skirt is worn with what appears to be a scarf or shawl, perhaps triangular in shape, one point of which is tied to the skirt in the front, while the other ends are passed over the shoulders (see pl. XCIV, J a). Other examples show the split skirt worn with a narrow strip of material which passes round the back of the neck and falls over the



breasts (see pl.XCIV, J.b), recalling the linen bands worn by dancers during the Old Kingdom.

Examples:

Meir, vol.VI, pls.X, XII and XIX. All the girls wearing these skirt appear to be dancers, and some of them are performing before the altar of Hathor. Some of the skirts are painted red where they touch the wearer's flesh but grey elsewhere, perhaps in an attempt to indicate that they were made of a semi-transparent material.

B.I.F.A.O. 1908, vol.VI, pl.VIII. Here it is worn by dancers in the so-called tomb of the dancers.

GROUP K (pl.XCIV, K a/b)

In the tomb of Wb-htp the sixth of Meir there are representations of two dresses which, though they bear a certain resemblance to type B.4 c, in that they cover both breasts and one shoulder, deserve to be considered separately because in both cases extra material is shown hanging down the wearer's back.

Examples:

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XV. This dress, worn by the only known daughter of Wb-htp the sixth was made of material with a fringe or decorative edging. A triangular piece of cloth is shown standing stiffly away from the body, under the left arm-pit, perhaps as an attempt on the part of the artist to show that the garment was made by wrapping material round the body (see pl. XCIV, k a).

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XIII. This dress is also worn by the daughter of Wb-htp and it is painted red where it touches her flesh, but grey elsewhere, perhaps to indicate that it was made of semi-transparent linen. The dress was apparently made by passing a long piece of cloth over the right shoulder, thus

leaving the left shoulder bare, and making a seam down the left side. The surplus material hung down the right side of the back forming a drapery or half-cloak. On the left shoulder, probably to help the garment hold in place, an ornament in the shape of a fish is shown (see pl.XCIV, K b), though there is no indication as to how the ornament was attached to the material either in the front or the back.

### Hair styles.

From at least the beginning of the Old Kingdom, and probably for some considerable time before that \*(49), it was customary for Egyptians of both sexes to wear wigs on all formal occasions. The remains of these wigs have survived in graves of the Middle Kingdom. A box found in a tomb at Idsht, for example, contained "the blackened remains of some hairy substance, possibly a wig" \*(50).

Instead of a full wig, the Egyptian woman might prefer to use individual false tresses which could be placed among her own hair to pad it out \*(51).

Although sculptures usually indicate the presence of real hair under a wig, it is not possible to identify styles where only a few false curls were added, and it is never possible to identify in tomb paintings whether or not a wig is being worn.

When a parting is shown it is invariably a centre parting.

### GROUP A

The most popular length for women's hair was reaching roughly to the level of the arm-pits or a little below \*(52).

#### Type A.1 (pl.XCV, A.1, a/h)

This represents the most popular of all Egyptian hairstyles for women,

and it occurs on monuments from the earliest through to the latest periods. The long hair is dressed from a central parting and falls straight round the head. Sometimes it is shown as smooth all the way round (see pl.XCV, A.1 b), whilst at others it is divided in three with one part falling down the back, and the other two thirds being brought forward over the shoulders (see pl.XCV, A.1 c/d). The ears may be concealed by the hair (see pl.XCV, A.1 a, b and d), or the hair may be brushed back to reveal the ears ( see pl.XCV, A.1 c, e and f).

Most paintings and sculptures show the hair as being straight and smooth, but there are occasional examples \*(52) of the hair or wig terminating in curls (see pl.XCV, A.1 e/g). Though the lines representing the hair are usually straight, as if to indicate the strands have been brushed straight down, some examples are patterned, presumably to indicate plaits (see pl.XCV, A.1 g), while others are so made \*(54) as to indicate a wig composed of layers of curls (see pl.XCV, A.1 h).

#### Examples:

There are too many examples of this wig to justify quoting any individual reference, but it was represented as being worn by all classes of women from goddesses to peasants.

#### Type A.2 (pl.XCV, A.2)

A more elaborate method of dressing long hair is to be found illustrated in tombs at Meir. The hair is allowed to fall loosely around the head and shoulders, but in addition, there is a long, thick plait, which commences at the top of the head and hangs to below the level of the loose hair. Since the only known representations of this style of Middle Kingdom date occur in tomb paintings and are therefore always in profile, it is

impossible to say whether or not there was a second plait on the other side of the head \*(55). A single side-lock is usually interpreted as a sign of youth, but the women adopting the style at Meir, though young, are apparently adults.

The anthropoid coffin of Snbtisy represents that lady wearing an unusual hairstyle, which may be an elaboration of type A.2. Besides the main masses of hair, which fall either side of the face, as in type A.1.a, there are also plaits falling down either side of the face from beneath the head-cloth (see pl.C, the figure on the left).

Examples:

Meir, vol.VI, pl.X.

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Idsh, frontispiece.

Type A.3 (pls.XCV/XCVI, A.3 a/d)

Long hair can be a great inconvenience to those engaged in physical exertions and peasants and servants at work were often shown with their hair brushed away from the face to fall down the back. Such an arrangement might be held in place by a linen band, and the ears might or might not be covered with hair.

Some variations suggest that the hair was either cut shorter at the sides, or was looped and pinned up, while the rest of the hair hung down the back (see pl.XCV, A.3 c). The bunch of the hair at the back of the head was occasionally gathered together in a small knot or plait (see pl.XCVI, A.3 d).

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XII and XXIX. The women with this hair style are shown making bread and gleaning.

el Bersheh, vol.I, pls.XXV, XXVI and XXXI. Scenes of women making bread and spinning.

Antefokar, pl.XXIII. The style here is adopted by female singers.

B.M.F.A., 1968, vol.LXVI, no.343, p.15, figs.12/13. One of the offerings bearers from the tomb of Dhwti-nht of el Bersheh has this style.

Chassinat and Palanque, Fouilles dans la nécropole d'Assiout, pls.IX/X.

#### GROUP B

This style of hair arrangement is the only one that belongs exclusively to the Middle Kingdom \*(56). To achieve the fullness which is the salient feature of this style, false tresses must have been used to pad out the locks of the wearer. It was an elaborate coiffeur, which was probably difficult to arrange and hold in place, and this would explain why it seems never to have been worn by peasant or serving women.

#### Type B.1 (pls.XCVI, B.1 a/b, CIV and CV)

The arrangement of this style necessitated dividing the hair into three bunches from a central parting. The hair in the bunch at the back of the head was allowed to fall straight down, but the bunches on either side of the face were padded out to form rolls, which were held in place by one or more ribbons. The most intricate version needed several ribbons to hold it in place, and the rolls on each side of the face terminated in a large curl, which was often decorated with a hair ornament (see pl.XCVI, B.1 a). In the simpler version, the fullness was maintained, but to a lesser degree, and the bunches at the side of the face were not curled at the ends (see pl.XCVI, B.1 b).

**Examples:**

pl.CIV. This is Nfrt, the wife of Senusret II.

pl. CV. This is a daughter of one of the governors of el Bersheh.

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.II, pl.78, no.473 and pl.79,  
no.474.

Cairo stelae 20097 and 20497.

Garstang, Burial Customs, figs.205 and 211.

Brunton, Qau and Badari, vol.III, pl.X.

Engelbach, Harageh, pl.I.

The Egyptian Expedition 1932/33, Excavations at Idsh, Section II  
of the B.M.M.A. for November 1933, figs.17/18.

Legrain, Statues et Statuettes des rois et particuliers, vol.I,  
pl.IV: 42.009.

Type B.2 (pl.XCVI, B.2)

This variation of the style appears to have been worn exclusively by young girls. The two rolls of hair at the side of the face were the same as in type B.1, but here the top of the head was completely shaved.

**Examples:**

Borchardt, Statuen and Statuetten, vol.II, pl.76, no.459.

Steindorff, Catalogue of the Egyptian Sculpture in the Walters Art  
Gallery, pl.XII, no.50.

GROUP C

▲ bouffant style for hair cut short to about the level of the jaw.

Type C.1 (pl.XCVI, C.1 a/d)

The basic version of this style shows the wearer's short hair fluffed out round her face, sometimes covering the ears completely, sometimes brought

round the ears. When this style is portrayed in a tomb relief the artist usually indicates that it was arranged in series of small curls (see pl.XCVI, C.1 c). In one case the basic style has been elaborated upon by the addition of a side plait (see pl.XCVI, C.1 d).

**Examples:**

Naville, *The Eleventh Dynasty Temple*, vol.I, pl.IX, where it is shown being worn by an offering bearer. Also vol.I, pl.XVII, nos.C, D, and F and vol.III, pl.II, where it is worn by inmates of the harim of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep.

British Museum stela, vol.I, pl.51. On this occasion this style is worn by peasants.

Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten*, vol.I, pl.46, no.223, and vol.II, pl.84, nos.495, 496 and 498.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XI. Some of the women in the procession wear their hair in this style with the additional plait.

Breasted, *Egyptian Servant Statues*, pls.56 a and 57. The style is worn by offering bearers.

Type C.2 (pl.XCVI, C.2 a/b)

This clearly resembles the preceding style but here the hair at the back of the head has been raised considerably. In a modern style this effect would be obtained by back-combing, but the Egyptian examples are more likely to have been achieved by piling the hair on the head and keeping it in place with pins and ribbons, or by the aid of some false tresses.

In the case of the example from Beni Hasan quoted below, the all-over shape illustrated is so pointed that it may not represent hair at all, but some species of cap (see pl.XCVI, C.2 b).

This style is very rarely illustrated and appears to have been confined to foreigners and servants, who may also have been of foreign origin

Examples:

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XVIII. The style is worn by a servant bringing offerings.

Garstang, Burial Customs, fig.138. This statuette is thought to be of a foreign woman, probably a Libyan.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXV. One of the htt pr wears her hair in this style.

#### GROUP D

As in Group C, the hair is cut very short in this style, but instead of standing away from the head, it appears to have lain flat against the skull.

#### Type D.1 (pl.XCVII, D.1 a/c)

In most of the representations of this style, the hair is simply indicated by a flat coat of black paint, conveying the impression of a smooth style (see pl.XCVII, D.1 a), but in those statuettes and reliefs where greater attention is paid to detail, it is clear that the hair could also be dressed in flat, tight curls (see pl.XCVII, D.1 b), or in layers of larger curls (see pl.XCVII, D.1 c).

The existence of statuettes of women with their hair dressed in this way confirms that it was an individual style in its own right and not just an inadequate representation of type C.1.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XII and XIII, and vol.II, pls.VII and XVII. The style is worn by singers, dancers, women grinding corn and baking.

el Bersheh, vol.II, pl.XIV. Singers and dancers.



Neville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.I.

pl.XVII, no.B. This is one of the women of the royal harem.

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pl.89a and 90d.

Meir, vol.II, pl.V. Worn by the maids.

Antefokar, pls.III, XV, XVIII, XIX, XXI and XXIII. Women gleaning, dancers, and the priestesses playing the roles of the two Kites all wear their hair in this style.

B.M.F.A, 1968, vol.LXVI, no. 343, p.7, fig.3. The woman is the second of three female offering bearers.

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.I, pl.48, no.230, and vol.II, pl.82, no.493.

British Museum relief no.1819. The woman is a King's Daughter (s3t nsw).

Type D.2 (pl.XCVII, D.2. a/g)

The hair is dressed very closely to the head, but there is extra hair, either the real hair of the girl or false tresses, which is arranged in side locks or plaits, some of which may have hair ornaments attached to them (see pl.XCVII, D.2 c and d). It is difficult to decide how much of the hair belongs to the wearer, but since most of these styles are worn by small girls the hair is probably their own.

Two variations of this style (nos.D.2 f and g) may not in fact be plaits, but a bunch of hair gathered together in the style now known as a "pony tail".

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.II, pls.IV and VIIIA. Children at play, type D.2 d.

British Museum Stelae, vol.III, pl.15, type D.2 c.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XV. The daughter of Wh-htp, type D.2 a.

Cairo stelae 20039, 20123, 20226, 20376, 20504, 20596, 20677, 20694, 20706, 20709, 20722, 20731, 20736, 20747. Types D.2 b/g are all represented on these stelae.

Antefokar, pl.XXIII. This scene shows dancers with their hair dressed in style D.2 c. This style of hair arrangement, which is decorated with a pom-pom, has Old Kingdom precedents.

GROUP E (pl.XCVIII, E. a/b)

In this style, the hair is drawn into a bun in the nape of the neck, and is sometimes shown as being held in place with a band.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.XIII and XLV. This is the style adopted by the Libyan women shown in this scene. It is a very unusual style, so rarely illustrated, that it may have been peculiar to Libyan women, or women of Libyan origin living in Egypt.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXXV. Here it is worn by a htt pr nt 't hnkt.

GROUP F, (pls. XCVIII and XCIX, F. a/e)

In order to obtain the various styles belonging to this group, it was necessary to allow the hair to grow long in some places, but to shave the rest of the head completely. The patches of hair might all be cut to a uniform length, but often they were trimmed to varying lengths.

There was usually a patch of hair on the top of the head from which the hair fell into three or more plaits round the head.

There were numerous variations of this style, so only some of the more popular arrangements have been illustrated on plates XCVIII and XCIX, but they were apparently only favoured by certain classes, for all the examples occur either on statuettes of servants bringing offerings, or on the figurines of naked girls, who may have represented concubines of the deceased

Examples:

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.I, pl.53, no.248.

Breasted, Sgyptian Servant Statues, pl.89, b/c.

B.I.F.A.O. 1953, vol.LIII, p.12, fig.4, p.13, fig.5, p.14, figs 6 and 7, and pls.I, IV and V.

#### Crowns, Fillets, Jewellery and Insignia.

It has been suggested that tomb paintings do not give either a complete or an accurate record of the details of Egyptian costumes and accessories, and in no case are the discrepancies between representations and actual objects so marked as in the range of jewellery illustrated. Tomb paintings, with certain notable exceptions, always show women wearing a limited range of jewels, which are identical to those shown on Old Kingdom reliefs, but the bulk of the jewels found in tombs, which were those worn by the deceased in her life time, are radically different.

Only in the tomb of Wb-htp the sixth of Meir can the tomb paintings be said to reflect accurately the styles of known grave goods, and it is this very tomb which also shows women wearing the most colourful and unusually designed costumes. If the artist responsible for designing the scenes in this tomb was accurate in the matter of jewellery, as he demonstrably is, then the inference must be that he also presented a more accurate record of the dresses worn by women in daily life.

Although it has been necessary occasionally to refer to funerary jewellery, detailed discussion of such pieces has been omitted in order to concentrate on the jewellery that was worn in life, and is so inadequately represented on the monuments. References to scarabs have also been deliberately omitted, although some do appear as beads in necklaces, and others were made into highly decorative rings \*(57), because their main functions were as amulets or seals, and as such are beyond the terms of reference of this work \*(58).

GROUP A - Crowns.

Type A.1 (pl.XCIX, A.1 a/o)

In the New Kingdom, the crown most frequently shown being worn by the chief queens (hmt wrt nsw, the King's Great Wife) of the successive monarchs, was the "Vulture Crown". No actual crown of this type has survived \*(59), but it would appear to have been made to represent a vulture in flight. When placed on the head, the head of the vulture rose above the Queen's brow, while the outstretched wings were folded down the sides of her face to the shoulders, or just below. The body of the vulture rested on the top of the head and the tail was raised up slightly behind. In some versions the legs were not shown, but in others they protruded from beneath the wings and grasped ḥn amulets.

This elaborate headdress could have been made of real feathers, or pieces of cloth cut to resemble feathers, attached to a wire frame, but it is more likely to have been made of gold \*(60). The vulture crown made its first appearance in the Old Kingdom when, according to present evidence, it was reserved exclusively for the use of goddesses. During the Middle Kingdom reliefs and statues began to appear showing queens as well as goddesses

wearing this crown, but these are few in number, a fact which may be attributed at least in part, to the widespread destruction of monuments, particularly royal funeral and temple reliefs, of this period.

Examples:

Mond and Myers, Temples of Armant, pls.XCV and XCVI. These scenes show goddesses wearing crowns which have the bodies of vultures, but the heads of snakes.

Hayes, The Scepter of Egypt, vol.I, fig.103. This relief shows two goddesses, both with crowns in the form of vultures. The head of one crown is a vulture, while the other is a snake.

Naville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.I, pl.XXIII. This relief has, unfortunately, suffered a great deal of damage, so it is uncertain if Kmsit is really wearing a crown of this type. It definitely appears to have been a feathered headdress fitting to the sides of the face, but there is no indication of a vulture or snake head on the front.

Legrain, Statues et Statuettes de rois et de particuliers, vol.I, pl.IV: 42.009. The queen is wearing a vulture crown with the head of a snake.

Komorzynski, Das Erbe des Alten Ägypten, pl.32. This is a statue of a queen of the Middle Kingdom wearing a crown of this type. The vulture or snake head has been broken off.

Steindorff, Catalogue of Egyptian Sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery, pl.VII, no.31. This is the head of the statue of an unidentified queen of the Middle Kingdom, wearing a crown of this type.

Abydos, vol.III, pl.XIII. The stela of Queen Tw-ht-ib (see above p. 253) shows that lady wearing this crown, which in this case has the head

of a snake. This is surmounted by a circlet and two plumes (see pl.XCIX, A.1 b). If the scale is reasonably accurate, then the whole crown would have reached a height of between 50 and 60 centimetres above the head. Even supposing the plumes were made of thin sheets of gold, like the plumes attached to the circlet of the 3t nsu S3t-Hthr-Iwnt (see below p. 454 ), this would still have been an extraordinarily difficult structure to wear. However, it may well be that, in reality, the plumes were no taller than the modest size of those of S3t-Hthr-Iwnt.

Type A.2 (pl.XCIX, A.2 a/b)

In appearance, this headdress closely resembles the White Crown of Upper Egypt, but it is flattened instead of rounded at the top. In those paintings which supply rather more than the usual amount of detail, there are indications to show that these crowns were probably made of reeds, and that they were, in some cases, of open work construction.

Examples:

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pl.XXIX and Antefokar, pl.XXII. These two scenes show swr-dancers in funeral processions, wearing crowns of this type. The dancers in the tomb of Antefokar would appear to be men, but at Beni Hasan the pale skin and pronounced breasts of the dancers suggest that they were women.

GROUP B - Headscarves (pl.XCIX and C, B. a/c)

The drying effects of the intense heat of the sun in summer, combined with the irritations of dust and sand, which were the inevitable accompaniments of many of the daily labours of the Egyptian peasant women, must have resulted, at an early date, in their adopting the protection of some kind of headcloth or scarf. Like winter garments and cloaks, these

were hardly ever represented on statues or in tomb paintings, presumably because they did not accord with the notion of the idyllic Hereafter, free from such inconveniences as extremes of temperature, and because they concealed hair and limbs, which convention required to be shown.

A few monuments show women in rather decorative headcloths \*(61), but the majority are more likely to have worn a simple scarf consisting of a piece of cloth, held in place by a linen fillet, or by a tape attached to the scarf itself (see pl.XCIX B a), an example of which has survived from antiquity \*(62).

#### Examples:

Eton College collection, no.33. This is a servant statuette of a woman wearing a white headcloth (see pl.C, B b).

Mogensen, La Glyptothèque ny Carlsberg, pl.XII, A51, AE.I.N. 670.

Mace and Winlock. The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, Frontispiece.

The anthropoid coffin of Snbtsy represents her wearing some kind of headcloth which is not the nms, though it probably is of funeral significance, rather than a representation of something worn in life \*(63).

#### GROUP C - Fillets and Circlets

##### Type C.1 (pls.C and CI, C.1 a/h)

In origin, the fillet had the strictly practical function of keeping hair out of the eyes of the wearer. It was later developed into a highly decorative ornament, but the simplest version, consisting of a narrow linen band, continued in use throughout the pharaonic period.

The linen band could be tied round the whole head, just above the brows, or it could be tied round the hair alone. It was used with a wide variety of hair styles, and a selection has been made as examples for illustration.

## Examples:

Eton College collection, no.33. The headcloth of this servant is held in place by a fillet (see pl.C, B b).

el Bersheh, vol.I, pls.XX and XXV - worn by the wife of the owner of the tomb and by a woman making bread, and vol.II, pl.XIV - worn by dancers.

Antefokar, pl.XVIII, worn by the Kites.

B.I.F.A.O., 1908, vol.VI, pls.VIII and IX - worn by dancers.

Beni Hasan, vol.I, pls.X and XXXI - worn by a htt pr and by Aamu women.

British Museum stela, vol.II, pl.44 - worn by relatives of the owner.

Type C.2 (CI, C.2 a/c)

The simple linen band was worn by women of all classes, but the stylised version, made of precious metal, semi-precious stones and enamels, was available only to the wealthy. These stylised fillets preserve the two essential elements of the linen originals - a band round the head and a knot securing it at the back.

## Examples:

Meir, vol.VI, pls.XI, XIII and XVI - worn by women of the harim of Wh-htp the sixth.

pl.CV - worn by one of the daughters of Dhwty-htp of el Bersheh.

Cairo stela 20394 - worn by a King's Daughter (s3t-nsw). There is a uraeus on the front of this circlet, indicating the rank of the wearer.

Cairo stela 20754 - a woman wears a fillet painted blue, green and white.



de Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour, Mars-Juin 1894, pl.XXXVIII:G.  
Type C.3 (pl.CI, C.3 a/b and pls.CVI/CVIII)

Besides the stylised fillet, Egyptian women also appear to have worn a wide range of circlets and diadems, varying in complexity and value according to the wealth of the owner. With a few notable exceptions such circlets and diadems are not illustrated on the monuments, but actual examples of such pieces have been found in the few rich graves which have escaped the attentions of the tomb robbers.

Examples:

J.N.E.S., 1956, vol.XV, pl.XIV:C. A woman, probably Queen Nfrw, is shown wearing a circlet of beads.

Antaeopolis, pl.XXIV. This shows very simple bead circlets worn by dancers.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XV. This shows a woman wearing rather an unusual diadem, which appears to cover the top of the head (see pl.CI, C.3 b). Unfortunately the wall has been badly damaged, and it is impossible to trace the details of this piece.

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, pl.XXI. This shows the circlet of Snbtsy, which consisted of three strands of looped gold wire, caught together in front by an ornament.

pl.CVI. This is the circlet of the King's Daughter (s3t nsu) S3t-Hth-Twnt, which was formed as a simple gold band, to which were attached a uraeus and fifteen rosettes, all inlaid with lapis lazuli, carnelian, garnet, and green and blue pastes. Three gold streamers were attached to the sides and the back, and plumes, cut from a thin sheet of gold, rose from the back to a height of 21.5 cms. (see pl.XCIX, A.1 c).

Meir, vol.VI, pls.X and XIX. Some of the singers and dancers in the procession approaching the altar of Hathor wear circlets with two plumes at the back (see pl.CI, C.3 a), which clearly resemble the diadem of Sjt-Hthr-Iwnt referred to above, even though these may have been made of less expensive materials.

pls.CVII and CVIII. These two exquisite diadems were the property of the sjt nsw Hnnt. One is a formal affair, comprised of circlet decorated with rosettes and miniature plumes, while the other is made of gold wires, decorated with tiny flowers and caught together with rosettes, all of which are inlaid.

#### GROUP D - Hair Ornaments.

##### Type D.1 (pl.CI, D.1)

The only known representation of this remarkable hair ornament appears in the tomb of Queen Nfrw at Thebes \*(64), where it is shown in a relief, being worn by singers in a procession. The ornament would seem to have been fastened in some way to the hair on the top of the head, and allowed to fall straight down the back to below shoulder level. It was made of large ball beads, strung alternately with barrel beads, and the beads in the relief were painted white, presumably to indicate that they were made of silver.

##### Type D.2 (pl.CI, D.2)

Rather more common, were small ornaments, made to slip round, or to be tied to, individual locks of real hair or wigs.

#### Examples:

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, pl.XXI. Besides her circlet, already referred to above, Snbtsy owned a set of 98 gold rosettes, made by beating gold plate into dies, probably of wood. The

rosettes have either two holes or a bar at the back, through which a thread would pass to tie them to the hair.

The rosettes were found scattered round the head of the corpse, and, though the hair had disappeared, its imprint was still clearly visible in the resin.

Antaeopolis, pl.XXIV. The painting has been damaged, but small ornaments are clearly visible, attached to the hair of the dancers.

The head from a wooden statuette of a woman, discovered at Idsh in 1907 by the expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York \*(65), shows an individual with a large wig. The wig had been damaged, but the lines representing individual plaits are still visible, and adhering to these are tiny flakes of gold leaf, indicating that this woman was wearing beads or rosettes in her hair.

pl.CVI. In the tomb of S3t-Hth<sup>3</sup>-Twnt at Lahun there were 251 small gold tubes, and it has been suggested that these were wig ornaments.

#### Type D.3 (pl.CI, D.3)

Instead of numerous rosettes or beads, which must have taken considerable time and effort to arrange in her hair, the Egyptian woman of the Middle Kingdom might prefer to decorate her coiffeur with one, two, or three large ornaments, according to the intricacies of the design.

#### Examples:

pls.CIV and CV. The hair style listed above as B.1 a, was often decorated with two ornaments, which were attached to the large curls that fell on to the breasts of the wearer.

pl.C, B c. The coffin of Snb<sup>3</sup>tisy shows similar ornaments attached to her plaits.

pl.XCVIII, F.d. The servant, whose hairstyle is represented on pl.XCVIII, wore a single hair ornament, attached to the top of her head.

pl.CI, D.3. A similar type of ornament might be worn, either with a band round the hair, or with two large hair rings \*(66). Such a style is to be seen on a statuette from grave Y524 at Hu, see Petrie, Diospolis Parva, pl.XXVI.

#### GROUP E - Necklaces, Pendants and Amulets.

Bead necklaces of various types enjoyed immense popularity from the very earliest times, and even the poorest of graves have yielded numbers of beads, though all other goods might be lacking.

##### Type E.1 (pl.CII, E.1 a/b)

Tomb paintings and statues of the Middle Kingdom give the erroneous impression that Egyptian women favoured broad collars made of beads, to the exclusion of almost any other style of necklace. This bead collar, which dates back at least to the early Old Kingdom \*(67), was usually represented as a solid structure (pl.CII, E.1 a), but this may be either by convention, following a traditional pattern suitable for a funeral monument, or because it was easier to show them in this way. Actual collars found in graves of the Middle Kingdom \*(68) were more likely to have been of a delicate open-work design (see pl.CIX).

The strands of beads were threaded into semi-circular or falcon-headed ends, which were fastened together with ties, to which was attached a counter-poise to hold the necklace in position (see pl.CII, E.1 b).

Besides the bead collars and other items of jewellery, which had been worn during the lifetime of their owners, graves also contained jewels, specially manufactured for funerary use (see pl.CX), but these have been excluded, since they were never intended to be worn by the living \*(69).

### Examples:

The various designs of this collar shown in tomb paintings and on stelae and statues are too numerous to list individually. They are shown being worn by goddesses, members of the royal family, the families of courtiers and officials of all ranks, children, concubines, nurses, ladies' maids, musicians, singers, dancers and offering bearers, though the richness of the materials and the skill of manufacture would naturally depend on the wealth of the owner. Women spinning, weaving, cooking, and labouring in the fields are not shown wearing jewellery. This may be because women of humble origin could not afford elaborate jewellery, or because the artists had little interest in depicting the possessions of unimportant peasants, but it may equally be for the practical reason that jewellery was not worn by those engaged in these tasks because it got in the way and might be broken.

### Type E.2 (pls. CXI and CXII)

Pectorals were manifestly expensive pieces of jewellery, which only the wealthy could afford, consisting as they did, of several delicate elements made of precious metals and inlays, soldered together. Pectorals depicted on statues and in tomb paintings give the appearance of being solid, but all the examples from graves of the Middle Kingdom period show that they were of open work.

### Examples:

pl. CIV - worn by Queen Nfrt.

pl. CV - worn by the daughter of a governor of el Bersheh.

pl. CXI - the pectoral of the s3t nsw Mrrt, found at Dahshur.

pl. CXII - the pectoral of the s3t nsw S3t-Hthr-Iwnt, found at Lahun

Eng elbach, Riqqeh and Memphis VI, pl. I, no. 2. This is a very interesting piece because it comes from a modest grave, whereas all the

other examples quoted here belonged to royalty, or to members of the aristocracy \*(70).

Type E.3 (pl.CII, E.3 d and pl.CXIII)

Though pendants and necklaces are obviously decorative, they were often composed of amulets as well as beads, so they had protective powers as well.

(a) The simplest form of pendant was a single oval or pear-shaped stone, pierced at the top, and suspended on a thread or on a bead necklace. These must not be confused with the single barrel bead, made of carnelian, which is sometimes depicted on anthropoid coffins of the Twelfth Dynasty and is a purely funeral amulet \*(71).

Examples: The Egyptian Expedition of 1933/4, The Excavations at Idshut, Section II of the B.M.M.A. for November 1934, fig.29, the figure on the extreme left. See also pl.LXXXIX C.3 b, of this work.

The Egyptian Expedition of 1922/3, The Excavations at Thebes, Part II of the B.M.M.A. for December 1923, fig.15.

Petrie, Amulets, pl.XVI.

(b) Certain hieroglyphic signs, which had amuletic value \*(72), were often made of precious metals and inlays, and were worn as pendants or as necklaces. The figure of a god or sacred animal might also be worn as a pendant.

Examples:

Macos and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Idshut, pls.IXII/XXIII.

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.I, pl.49, no.234. This girl is wearing a necklace from which is suspended the figure of a cat.

Engelbach, Riqqeh and Memphis VI, pl.I, no.3. This small figure of the god Min was found at the neck of a corpse, among a broken string of beads.

pl.CXIII. The s3t nsw Mrwt had several of these hieroglyph signs.

(c) Pendants in the form of shells were popular amongst all classes during the Middle Kingdom. They range from real shells with a hole bored through them to examples made of gold and inlaid.

Examples:

Petrie, Amulets, pl.XIV.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XV.

Engelbach, Riqqeh and Memphis VI, pl.I, no.4. This plain gold shell bears the prenomen of Senusret I.

de Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour, Mars-Juin 1894, pls.XVII, XX and XXII.

(d) Another popular form of pendant was a fish, suspended from a ring in its mouth, as if it was caught on a fish hook (see pl.CII, E.3 d).

Examples:

Garstang, Burial Customs, pl.V and fig.104.

Type E.4 (pls.C II and CXIV)

Necklaces made of one or more strings of beads are rarely shown in tomb paintings or on stelae and statues, yet such necklaces form the bulk of the material that has been found in graves.

Single strings of beads of all the common types have been found, but strings of large spheroid beads, especially those made of amethysts, were particularly popular during the Middle Kingdom. More elaborate designs had beads, scarabs, and other amulets threaded together.

In rich, well-made necklaces, the beads were arranged with geometric precision, and with careful attention to colour. In the manufacture of necklaces for the poorer members of the community, however, such niceties tended to be ignored.

## Examples:

pl.CII, E.4. The necklace is from a grave at Sedment, no.56 , and it is drawn in an unpublished notebook in University College, London, marked 95b, Sedment 1921, Hynes.

pl.CXIV - the necklaces of W3h, found on his mummy at Thebes.

These are typical of necklaces worn by women as well as men.

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, pls.XXII/XXIII.

de Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour, Mars-Juin 1894, pls.XVIII, XXII and XXIV; and 1894/5, pls.VII, VIII and XII.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XV.

Antaeopolis, pl.XXIV.

The Egyptian Expedition, The Excavations at Thebes 1922/3., Part II of the B.M.M.A. for December 1923, fig.15.

Neville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.II, pl.XVI.

Type E.5 (pl.CII, E.5)

Chokers, that is collars of beads fitting closely round the throat, rather than falling on the chest, had made their first appearance during the Old Kingdom and continued in favour at least well into the New Kingdom, yet, once again, the only tomb in the Middle Kingdom to illustrate such a necklace is that of Wh-htp the sixth of Meir.

## Examples:

Meir, vol.VI, pls.XI, XV and XVII.

Type E.6 (pl.XCIV, I b and pl.CII, E.6)

Some of the small faience figurines and wooden statuettes of naked girls show them wearing long strings of beads which passed over the shoulder between the breasts and round the body at hip-level. Some have only one string, others have two, crossing between the breasts (pl.XCIV, I b).



There was an unpublished grave discovered at Sedment, which belonged to a girl aged about six and on her body there were five rows of white beads passing from the left shoulder across and round the body. There were six more strings of beads round her waist (see pl.CII, E.6).

**Examples:**

The Egyptian Expedition, The Excavations at Thebes 1922/3, Part II of the B.M.M.A. for December 1923, fig.15).

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pl.90b.

B.I.F.A.O. 1953, vol.LIII, pl.I.

Borchardt, Statuen und Statuetten, vol.I, pl.46, no.223 and vol.II, pl.84, nos.496 and 497.

Unpublished notebook in University College, London, marked 95b, Sedment 1921 (Hynes).

GROUP F - Bracelets and Anklets.

As in the case of circlets and necklaces, the archaeological evidence shows that by no means all the styles of bracelets and anklets that were popular during the Middle Kingdom, were represented in tomb paintings and other monuments.

Type F.1 (pl.CXV)

The bracelets and anklets most frequently shown in tomb paintings were rows of beads, lying side by side, and held in place with metal spacers. Actual jewels of this design have been found in tombs, and some were evidently worn by the owner during her lifetime, but tombs might also contain pieces which had been specially made as part of the funeral equipment \*(73)

**Examples:**

The comments concerning the women shown wearing bead collars (see above p.457 , type E.1) are also applicable here.

One interesting detail which should be noted is that in the tomb of W3h-k3 (B) at Qau \*(74), one of the dancers is shown wearing broad anklets from which hang falcon's claws, very reminiscent of those found in some Middle Kingdom tombs (e.g. pl.CXVI, from Lahun, the grave of S3t-Hth-r-lwnt).

#### Type F.2

A simple style of bracelet found in many Middle Kingdom tombs consisted of a plain band of metal. In poorer graves, where metal was lacking, plain hoops of ivory and bone made bracelets of a similar style.

#### Examples:

de Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour Mars-Juin 1894 pls.XVII and XXII.

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, XXX p.73.

Naville, The Eleventh Dynasty Temple, vol.I, pl.X.

pl.CIV - worn by Nfrt above her broad bead bracelet.

#### Type F.3

Bracelets made of single rows of beads had been in use since the First Dynasty \*(75), yet they only very rarely illustrated in tomb paintings.

#### Examples:

Antaeopolis, pl.XXIV.

Winlock, The Treasure of el Lahun, pl.XII. These particular specimens were decorated with couchant lions, a decorative feature which appears in other tombs, even though the bracelets themselves have disintegrated.

pl.CXIII. From a royal tomb at Dahshur.

#### GROUP G - Bead Girdles and Skirts

##### Type G.1 (pls.EXII and CXVI)

One piece of jewellery, which was particularly favoured by women during the Middle Kingdom was the bead girdle, designed to be worn round the hips.

The most common version was composed of several large cowrie shells, linked by one or more rows of small beads. Other popular designs had lions' heads linked in a similar manner, or were made of several rows of beads, usually lentoid.

These girdles are only shown being worn by servants, but the presence of several beautiful specimens in the graves of various princesses of the Twelfth Dynasty and of a court lady indicate that they were in vogue among women of all ranks.

One woman in the tomb of W3h-k3 at Qau is wearing her bead girdle under a loose fitting dress, probably of type B.I, but it is difficult to believe that these beautiful and costly ornaments were permanently worn under dresses, for their full glory would not be visible, and they would ruin the straight, slim line of the body, on which the Egyptians set so much store.

The acrobat in the same tomb wears her girdle with a short, patterned skirt, and it may have helped to hold it up. It is possible that bead girdles could have been used to support some kind of loin cloth or short skirt, but if that was their real function then they were singularly badly designed for this role, having no special areas to which the cloth could be attached.

Apart from the examples from the tomb of W3h-k3, all the other illustrated examples occur on the small faience and wooden figurines and statuettes of naked young women. Since it has been suggested that at least some of these figures represent the concubines of the deceased, the abundance of jewellery but the lack of clothing would be very appropriate to their status.

It was not the custom to show women of the middle and upper classes

naked, so there are no pictures of women of these ranks wearing bead girdles. They may have worn the girdles over or under their dresses, but it is more likely that, during the heat of summer and in the privacy of their private apartments, such women may have gone naked except for a bead girdle, or perhaps a girdle worn in conjunction with a short skirt.

Examples:

B.I.F.A.O., 1953, vol.LIII, pl.I.

The Egyptian Expedition 1933/34, The Excavations at Lisht, Section II of the B.M.M.A. for November 1934, fig.29, the second on the left. Also fig.38, the girdle of Hpy.

Antaeopolis, pl.XXIV.

Breasted, Egyptian Servant Statues, pls.89 b/c and 90 b.

pls. CXII and CXVI - part of the Lahun treasure.

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, pls.XXII/XXIII.

de Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour Mars-Juin 1894, pls.XVII, XXII and XXIII.

G.2 (pl.CII, G.2)

There is a statuette of an offering bearer which was discovered in Assiut \*(76), and is now in the Louvre (no.E.12929), showing a woman wearing a dress of type B.4, over which there is a skirt of beads. The skirt has a beaded waist band from which beads are strung in a diamond pattern, forming a skirt that reaches the knees. It is clearly akin to the beaded dresses, listed in this study as type A.4, and it must not be confused with the beaded "aprons", which are purely funerary in character \*(77).

GROUP H - Objects Carried by Women.

In tomb paintings and tomb models and on stelae, female servants

are portrayed carrying a wide variety of offerings, as well as the personal belongings of their master or mistress. Their mistresses, however, are shown carrying a limited range of objects - flowers, "napkins", 'nh-amulets, cups and libation vessels, mirrors, mnt-necklaces, sistra, flails and staves. Of these, the last four items deserve consideration as denoting the occupation and rank of the bearer.

Type H.1 (pl.CIII, H.1 a/b)

During the New Kingdom practically every woman with any pretensions to gentility seems to have been a chantress of Amun, or one of the gods, and they were regularly portrayed carrying sistra and mnt-necklaces as evidence of their office. In the Middle Kingdom, however, it was very rare for cult objects to be shown, and when they were, it was within the context of a religious ritual.

Examples:

Meir, vol.I, pl.II, vol.II, pl.XV and vol.VI, pl.XII. In each case the sistra and necklaces are being carried or worn by women taking part in processions in honour of Hathor.

Type H.2 (pl.CIII, H.2 a/h)

During the Middle Kingdom it was common practice to show women of some social importance carrying an object which is usually referred to as a flail, since the specimens found in graves of the period and many of the illustrations of these objects, closely resemble that item of the pharaonic regalia.

The flail is clearly a mark of authority, and those carrying them were invariably the wives, or members of the family, of men of rank, social and administrative, and wealth. The representations of these flails differ considerably in matters of detail, but they are essentially the same object, being composed of a handle to which three strings of beads are attached.

Only a representative selection of the available material has been illustrated on pl.CIII, or quoted below as examples.

Examples:

British Museum Stelae, vol.II, pl.44.

British Museum Stelae, vol.II, pl.3.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XV.

Mace and Winlock, The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht, pl.XXX.

el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.XXX.

el Bersheh, vol.I, pl.VIII.

Meir, vol.VI, pl.XIII.

de Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour Mars-Juin 1894, pl.XXXIX.

Farag and Iskander, The Discovery of Neferwptah, pl.LII.

Type H.3 (pl.CIII, H.3 a/f)

An assortment of actual staves and weapons has been found in the graves of several women buried during the Middle Kingdom \*(78), but with the possible exception of the w3s-sceptre (see pl. CIII, H.3 f), all these were purely funeral in character, and even the w3s-sceptre, which is the only staff to appear on monuments in female hands, was carried by goddesses, not mortal women \*(79).

Scenes in tombs and on stelae do show women carrying staves, but these have lotus or papyrus heads, motifs which do not appear on the funerary equipment. That these staves are artificial objects and not real flowers or plant stems is made quite clear when they are compared with genuine flowers, carried by some women on funeral monuments, for real flowers are shown the curved stems which never reach the ground, (see pl.LXXXIV, A.2 b), whereas the staves are rigid and the ends usually touch the ground.

### Examples:

Type H.3 a - Beni Hasan, vol.II, pls.IV and XVI, carried by the wife and daughters of the local prince. This staff was known in the Old Kingdom \*(80).

Type H.3 b - Cairo stelae 20012 and 2055 .

Type H.3 c - Leiden stelae, pl.X, no.11 and Meir, vol.II, pl.II.

Type H.3 d - el Bersheh, vol.II, pl.II. Old Kingdom precedents can also be found for this staff \*(81).

Type H.3 e - Meir, vol.VI, pl.X. These are much shorter than the other types and appear more like sceptres than staves. They are carried by the women of the harim of Wn-htp.

### Sandals (pl.CIII)

Sandals are very rarely shown on monuments and when they are, they are generally being worn by noblewomen. Peasants and servants engaged in their manifold labours appear to have preferred to go bare-footed, reserving their sandals for more formal wear, as their descendants do today.

There were two simple designs of sandal, both of which had a completely flat sole. In the first version \*(82), a loop rises from the sole, passes between the big toe and the one next to it and so round the ankle. It is held in place by two small loops, which rise from the sole, either side of the ankle (see pl.CIII).

The second design is even more simple consisting only of two strips of material which rise from the sole, pass between the big toe and the one next to it, and are then fastened to the sole at either side of the heel \*(83). Both types of sandal were probably made of leather \*(84), though some may also have been made of reeds.

EXCURSUS A - THE PREFERENCE FOR THE MATERNAL LINE AS DISPLAYED ON  
STELAE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM.

A stela was an extremely important part of the funeral equipment, since it both established the identity of the deceased, and ensured him a regular supply of offerings in the Next World. It is therefore of the greatest significance that the men and women who, for whatever reason, decided to name only one parent on their stelae, almost invariably chose their mothers. On numerous other stelae, the owners carefully established their relationship with their mothers by the use of the words "born of", or the inclusion of a kin-term, but the identity of the father can often only be guessed at, because the figure of an otherwise unidentified man is shown in close proximity to that of the known mother of the owner. Even those stelae where the father of the owner is identified by a kin-term, often emphasise the importance of the mother by naming her in the dedicatory prayer as having born the owner, then by showing a figure on the body of the stela, accompanied by the words mwt.f, and further by recording that all the siblings of the owner were also her offspring.

An examination of Chart 1 shows that, besides there being a much higher proportion of mothers named than fathers, there was also a strong tendency to represent the maternal line in a much more thorough fashion than the paternal line, the only exception to this being the case of grandfathers and great-grandfathers.

The same preference for the female line is shown in the families of the wives of the owners of the stelae, though here the figures are much lower, because the husband was more interested in establishing his own identity, than that of his wife, who could expect preferential treatment on the stela of their son.

A similar regard for the female line of descent may be observed in the



inscriptions on statues and statuettes of the Middle Kingdom. Taking the collection in the Cairo Museum, published by Borchardt \*(1), as presenting a representative selection, the following figures can be established:

Total number of inscribed pieces \*(2): 56 non-royal, of which 9 belong to women.

Statues naming the owner's mother: 19.

Statues naming the owner's father: 5.

Statues naming the owner's maternal grandmother: 1.

Statues naming the owner's paternal grandmother: 0.

Even if it is accepted that, during the early Eighteenth Dynasty, there was a conscious, though eventually unsuccessful attempt, not simply to enthrone a female ruler, but also to establish a female succession \*(3), Egyptian society as a whole never displayed any strong tendency towards a true matriarchal system \*(4).

Throughout the pharaonic period, it appears that wealth could be inherited by both sexes, from either parent, at the discretion of the donor (see above, Section IV), while offices of state were held by men and, ideally, passed from father to son.

In the absence of any legal or religious text dealing specifically with the subject, it is difficult to assess the relative responsibilities and prerogatives of the maternal and paternal kin \*(5). The evidence at present available suggests that, though a male guardian might occasionally be appointed it was more usual, on the death of his father, for the eldest son to become head of the family and assume responsibility for his siblings who were still minors. If the eldest son was also still a child, then the mother appears to have had control over her children and the inheritance (see above, Section IV).

The moral and financial obligations of the adult members of both sides of a child's family are not defined anywhere, but it is evident that the burden by no means rested exclusively on the paternal kin, indeed, such inferences as may be drawn from literary texts point not only to a financial obligation, but also to a strong moral influence and deep emotional ties being attributed to the maternal kin. The author of Papyrus Anastasi III, for example, when ridiculing the profession of charioteer, said that a young man would be assigned to a particular stable because of "the father of his mother", it mwt.f, that is, because of the influence of his maternal grandfather \*(6).

A sage, bewailing the tribulations endured by the Egyptians of his day, listed as one of the horrors that a man might strike down "his brother of his mother", sn.f n mwt (see above p. 17 ), the inference being that, though murder was a crime at all times, the slaying of someone related through the mother was a particularly heinous offence \*(7).

The moral influence that could be exerted by the maternal kin is suggested by an incident in the Westcar Papyrus. When someone is required to rebuke the treacherous maid of Rwd-ddt and to attempt to reform her, one of her maternal relatives, "her brother of her mother", sn.s.n mwt.s is introduced into the story \*(8).

Even the Vizier Pth-htp, when he urged his son to beware of the sin of avarice, on the grounds that it can cause dissention within a family, singled out for special mention father and mother, husband and wife, and mother's brothers, (snw nw mwt), as being the closest of ties, which, nevertheless, could be disrupted by greed \*(9).

The evidence from written sources, whether legal, literary, or personal

correspondence, indicates that the Egyptians attached great importance both to the person, and the biological function of the mother, granted a favourable legal status to the female members of society, and recognised the interests of the maternal kin in a child's upbringing and welfare. The additional information, which is drawn from the family trees recorded on the stelae of the Middle Kingdom, further demonstrates that, in matters of descent and the establishment of one's identity, there was a strong bias towards the line of the mother, though not necessarily to the total exclusion of the paternal interests.

EXCURSUS B - THE RE-USE OF NAMES WITHIN THE FAMILY DURING THE MIDDLE  
KINGDOM AND ITS BEARING ON CONSANGUINEOUS MARRIAGES.

Although approximately 1500 stelae were examined in the course of this study, only 225 had sufficient names and relationships, adequately recorded for several generations, to render them eligible for inclusion in an analysis of the re-use of women's names within the Egyptian family. These are listed below, with notes on who/<sup>was</sup> named for whom, the relationships being given, as on the stelae, with reference to the owner of each stela. In some cases three or more relatives of both sexes share the same name, and it is not unknown for two or more sisters to have the same name. On stelae which give details of an extended family tree it will be observed that several names were re-used throughout the generations.

As women are the subject of this enquiry, the following list deals only with women's names, and those names which were common to both men and women, but the many examples of men named after male relatives have been omitted.

Cairo stela 20012 - Owner's wife and daughter.

200 1 - Owner's wife and sister.

20022 - Owner's daughter and sister.

Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's daughter and father.

Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.

Owner's brother and female servant.

20024 - Owner's wife, daughter, and wife's mother.

Owner's daughter, mother, and female servant.

20025 - Two of the owner's daughters, his sister, and his sister's daughter.

Two more of the owner's daughters and his mother.

20027 - Owner's wife and her daughter.

200 8 - Owner's daughter and granddaughter.

20035 - The owner and his daughter.

Owner's wife and daughter.

20039 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20051 - Owner's wife, wife's mother and his paternal great-grandmother.

Owner's wife's maternal grandmother and his paternal grandmother, his maternal grandfather, and his brother.

20055 - Owner's maternal grandmother and sister.

20057 - Owner's wife's mother and female servant.

20065 - Owner's wife's mother and his sister.

20075 - Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.

20077 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20079 - Owner's second wife and his maternal grandmother.

Owner's daughter by the second wife and the second wife's mother.

His first wife's mother and his paternal grandmother.

20091 - Owner's wife and granddaughter.

20096 - Owner's wife and mother.

20098 - Owner's mother and female servant.

20103 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20109 - Owner's wife and mother.

20114 - Owner's wife and daughter.

0117 - A woman and her daughter, relationship to the owner unknown.

20119 - Owner's wife and female servant.

20126 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20130 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20138 - Owner's wife and daughter.

20139 - Owner's wife and granddaughter.

20153 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's wife's mother and his paternal grandmother.

20158 - Owner's wife and mother.

20161 - The wife and granddaughter of one man.

The wife and granddaughter of another.

20177 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20179 - Owner's wife and maternal grandmother.

20195 - Owner's maternal grandmother and sister.

20227 - Owner's daughter and female servant.

Owner's son and female servant.

20230 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20236 - Owner's wife and daughter.

20238 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20245 - Owner's daughter and brother.

Owner's wife's sister and her paternal grandmother.

Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's wife's mother and sister.

20255 - The owner, his wife, sister, and paternal grandmother.

20261 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20265 - Owner's wife and mother.

20268 - Owner's wife and daughter.

20269 - Owner's daughter, sister, and father.

20270 - Owner's second wife and the mother of his first wife.

20271 - Owner's daughter and maternal grandmother.

20297 - Owner's daughter and niece.

20303 - Owner's wife and her mother.

Owner's mother and two of his sisters.

20306 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20322 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20323 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20324 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20326 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20330 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's daughter and his wife's mother.

Owner's maternal grandmother and sister.

20331 - A mother and daughter, relation to owner unknown.

20338 - Owner's wife and paternal grandmother.

Owner's sister and aunt.

20341 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's daughter and sister.

20346 - Owner's wife and paternal grandmother.

Owner's daughter and maternal great-grandmother.

20358 - Owner's daughter and mother.

0370 - Owner's daughter and his wife's mother.

20371 - Owner's mother and paternal grandmother.

20374 - Owner's wife and mother.

20378 - Owner's wife and mother.

20384 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20392 - The owner and his female servant.

20398 - Owner's grandson and female servant.

- 20425 - Owner's daughter and wife's mother.  
 Owner's daughter and sister.  
 Owner's daughter, sister and a niece.
- 20427 - Owner's son and female servant.
- 20429/30 - Owner's mother, paternal grandmother, and maternal great-grandmother.  
 Owner's paternal great-grandmother and paternal grandfather.
- 20431 - Owner's mother, paternal grandmother, and sister.
- 20444 - Owner's daughter, mother and niece.
- 20452 - Owner's mother and sister.
- 20455 - Owner's first wife, one of their daughters, and three of the daughters of the second wife.  
 Owner's second wife, a daughter of the first wife, his maternal grandmother, and sister.  
 Owner's daughter and mother.  
 Owner's daughter and sister.  
 Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.
- 20457 - Owner's sister and female servant.
- 20470 - Owner's mother and sister.
- 20473/4 - Owner's mother and sister.
- 0479 - Owner's daughter and mother.
- 20488 - Owner's wife and mother.
- 20515, 205 6, and 20751 - Owner's daughter and mother.  
 Owner's daughter and aunt.
- 20516 - Owner's daughter and mother.
- 20518 - Owner's daughter, mother, and wife's mother.



- 20523 - Owner's mother and daughter-in-law.
- 0530 - Owner's daughter and mother.
- Owner's daughter and wife's mother.
- 20532 - Owner's daughter and mother.
- 20534 - Owner's wife, aunt and cousin.
- 20535 - Owner's second wife and niece.
- Owner's mother and sister.
- Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.
- 20541 - Owner's daughter and mother.
- 20542 - Owner's daughter and mother.
- 20547 - Owner's daughter and wife's maternal grandmother.
- Owner's daughter and father.
- Owner's niece and her paternal grandmother.
- Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.
- Owner's wife's paternal grandmother and wife's sister.
- 20549 - Owner and his female servant.
- Owner's wife, his mother, two sisters, and two female servants.
- Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.
- 20550 - Owner and his female servant.
- Owner's wife and female servant.
- Owner's daughter and mother.
- Owner's daughter and sister.
- 20555 - Owner's wife and granddaughter.
- Owner's daughter-in-law and granddaughter.
- 20558 - Owner's daughter and mother.
- Owner's daughter and paternal grandmother.

- 20561 - Owner's mother and female servant.
- 20567/8 - A girl and her maternal grandmother, relation to owner unknown.
- 20575 - Owner's maternal grandmother and sister.  
Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.
- 205 1 - Owner's daughter and sister.  
Owner's wife's mother and his maternal grandmother.  
Owner's sister and daughter-in-law.
- 20582 - Owner's mother and cousin.
- 20588 - Owner's wife and daughter.
- 20589 - Owner's mother and sister.
- 20592 - Owner's wife and female servant.  
Owner's daughter and mother.  
Owner's daughter, female servant, and his brother's wife.
- 20613 - Owner's wife and daughter.  
Owner's daughter and wife's mother.
- 20617 - Owner's wife and daughter.  
Owner's daughter and paternal grandmother.  
Owner's daughter and his wife's sister.  
Owner's daughter and mother.
- 20619 - Owner's wife and granddaughter.  
Owner's daughter and sister.
- 2 6 9 - Owner's daughter and mother.
- 20636 - Owner's daughter and mother.  
Owner's paternal grandmoth r, sister, and father's first cousin.

20637 - Owner's daughter and wife's mother.

Owner's daughter and granddaughter.

20643 - Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.

20651 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20653 - Owner's daughter and m ther.

Owner's paternal grandmother, sister, and br ther.

20655 - Owner's daughter and wife's mother.

20658 - Owner's daughter and wife's mother.

Owner's daughter, paternal grandmother, and sister.

20677 - Owner's daughter and mother.

20681 - Owner's daughter and wife's mother.

20694 - Owner's wife and daughter.

20696 - Owner's wife and mother.

20713 - Owner's daughter, paternal grandmother, and sister.

Owner's mother and sister.

20733 - Owner's wife and granddaughter.

Owner's daughter and mother.

20749 - Owner's daughter and wife's mother.

20756 - Owner's wife and paternal grandmother.

Owner's daughter and mother.

Guimet, C.6 - Owner's maternal great-grandmother and sister.

Süddeutschen Sammlungen, vol.I, no.3 - Owner's wife, daughter and mother.

vol.I,-no.8 - Owner's daughter and mother.

vol.I, no.10 - Owner's maternal grandmother and niece.

v l.II, no.4 - Owner's daughter, sister and m ther.

Verchiedenen Sammlungen, no.1 - Owner's mother and cousin.

Berlin, 1183 - Owner's daughter, mother, and two nieces.

Owner's sister and niece.

1188 - Owner's sister and niece.

19500 - Owner's wife and daughter.

7312 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Louvre, C.24 - Owner's daughter and paternal grandmother.

C.181 - Owner's daughter and mother.

C.167 - Owner's two daughters, mother, and female servant.

Owner's son and a female servant.

C.40 - Owner's daughter and his wife's aunt.

C.196 - Owner's wife and female servant.

C.170 - Owner's daughter and female servant.

Florence, photo 37, Owner's two daughters, mother, and wife's maternal grandmother.

Owner's daughter, paternal grandmother and sister.

photo 59, Owner's daughter-in-law and sister-in-law.

Leiden, no.4 - Owner's daughter and mother.

no.12 - Owner's mother and sister.

nos.9 and 20 - Owner's wife and mother.

no.39 - Owner's wife and mother.

no.3 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's daughter and paternal grandfather.

no.50 - Owner's daughter and mother.

no.48 - Owner's aunt and female servant.

Stockholm no.14 - Owner's wife and maternal grandmother.

no.16 - Owner and his daughter.

Owner's wife's mother and wife's niece.

no.18 - Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.

Biblio. Nat. no.16 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Rec. de Trav. vol.III, p.12 : XV(94) - Owner's paternal grandmother and  
sister.

Owner's maternal grandmother and  
sister.

A brother and sister, relationship  
to owner uncertain.

vol.IX, p.33: 2(100) - Owner's daughter, wife, and her mother.

vol.IX, p.33: 3(123) - A girl and her paternal grandmother,  
relationship to owner unknown.

A girl and her paternal grandmother,  
relationship to owner unknown.

vol.IX, p.62: 7(119) - Owner's wife's sister and her maternal  
grandmother.

vol.IX, p.63: 8(69) - Owner's niece, named for her paternal  
grandmother.

vol.XIII, p.114: 24 - Mother and daughter, relationship to  
owner unknown.

vol.XIII, p.118: 30 - Owner's mother and three of his  
daughters.

vol.XXXII, p.141: 5, 6, and 7 - Owner's wife and mother.

vol.XXXII, p.146: 31 - Owner's mother and her sister.

v l.XXXII, p.15 : 26 - Owner's sister and paternal grandmother.

British Museum, vol.II, pl.3 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's daughter and paternal grandm ther.

vol.II, pl.4 - Owner's aunt and female servant.

vol.II, pl.1 (on the right) - Owner's daughter and mother.

(on the left) - Owner's wife and daughter.

v l.II, pl.14 (on the right) - Owner's daughter and mother.

v l.II, pl.15 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's daughter and paternal grandmother.

vol.II, pl.16 - The owner, who in this case is a woman, and her female servant.

vol.II, pl.34 - The owner, who in this case is a woman, and her daughter.

vol.II, pl.35 - Owner's daughter and mother.

vol.II, pls.41/3 - Owner's wife, her mother, his maternal grandmother, his maternal great-grandmother, his sister and his brother's wife.

Owner's daughter, mother and niece.

Owner's niece and his brother's mother-in-law.

vol.III, pl.7 - Owner's daughter and mother.

vol.III, pl.10 - Owner's maternal grandmother and sister.

vol.III, pl.15 - Owner's mother and niece.

vol.III, pl.22 - Owner's daughter and mother.

vol.III, pl.24 - Owner's wife and his maternal grandmother.

vol.III, pl.37 - Owner's wife and granddaughter.

vol.III, pl.40 - Owner's daughter and wife's mother.

vol.IV, pl.5 - Owner's sister and male servant.

v l.IV, pls.12/3 - Owner's mother, maternal grandmother, and sister.

v l.IV, pl.39 - Owner's wife and mother.

vol.IV, pl.41 - Owner's wife and mother.

vol.IV, pl.42 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Cinquantenaire 5 64 - Owner's mother and maternal great-grandmother.

Owner's maternal grandmother and sister.

St.Petersburg, pl.XVII: 83.26 - Owner's wife and granddaughter.

Owner's daughter and mother.

pl.XIX: 9 .29 - Owner's wife and sister.

pl.XX: 60.31 - Owner's daughter and mother.

pl.XXII: 67.35 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Tombs of the Courtiers, pl.22 - Owner's wife and female servant.

Owner's daughter, paternal grandmother,  
and sister.

Owner's father, son, and female servant.

pl.23 - Owner's daughter and mother.

pl.27 - Owner's wife and granddaughter.

Two granddaughters.

Alnwick Castle, no.1948 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Bologna, no.1904 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Hanover, no.2928 - Owner's wife and mother.

no.19 6 - Owner's daughter and sister.

Owner's paternal grandmother and sister.

el Arabah, no.312 - Owner's aunt and female servant.

Scepter of Egypt, vol.I, fig.2 1 - Owner's mother and niece.

Owner's great-niece and her maternal  
great-grandmother.

Simpson, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, pb.81, no.63.154 - Owner  
and his female servant.

Bolton, 10.20.11 - Owner's daughter and mother.

10. 0.12 - Owner's mother and sister.

Abydos, vol.III, pl.XIII - The owner, who in this case is a woman, her daughter and two of her granddaughters.

M.I.D.K., vol.IV, Abb.11 - Owner's daughter and wife.

Owner's daughter and mother.

Ann. du Serv., vol.XVII, ps.237/40 - Owner and his mother.

Owner's father and his wife's mother.

vol.XVII, p.240 - Owner's daughter and mother.

Owner's daughter and wife's mother.

vol.XXIX, p.7 - Owner's wife and daughter.

J.E.A., vol.XXV, pl.XXI:3 - Owner's daughter and mother.

J.E.A., vol.XLVII, pls.II/III - A woman, possibly the wife of the owner, and her daughter.

Owner's mother and female servant.

B.I.F.A.O., vol.XXX, p.111 - Owner's daughter and mother.

vol.XXXVII, ps.93/160: nos.6, 7, and 11 - Owner's wife and her maternal grandmother.

nos.13, 17, 20, and 30 - Owner's daughter, maternal grandmother, and sister.

The re-use of names by successive generations of a family may also be observed among the female relations of the provincial governors.

Beni Hasan - Daughter, mother, and maternal great-grandmother of Hnm(w)-htp II.

Daughter of Hnm(w)-htp II and his wife's mother.

Daughter of Hnm(w)-htp II and his maternal grandmother.

el Bersheh - Wife of Dhwtj-htp and his uncle's wife.



Mother-in-law of Dḥwty-nḥt and his paternal great-great great-grandmother.

Paternal grandmother of Dḥwty-ḥtp and his daughter.

Mother and daughter of Dḥwty-ḥtp.

Meir - Wife of Wḥ-ḥtp IV and his maternal grandmother.

The daughter, sister, and mother of Wḥ-ḥtp IV.

Elephantine - The mother, wife, and daughter of Sḏ-Rnpwt I.

el Kab - Sbk-nḥt and his daughter.

Mo'alla - The wife and daughter of 'nh-tify.

Relationships on stelae are almost invariably recorded with reference to the owner, so, in order to assess such details as, for example, how many women were named for their mothers, it was necessary, not only to count how many of the daughters of the owner were named after his wife, but also to calculate how many of the other known female relatives of the owner were named after their respective mothers.

One grave limitation to the evidence so gathered is that, since men tended to omit information concerning their wives' relatives, there is bound to be a bias in favour of the line of the owner of the stela, and thus the important details of how many women were named after their maternal relatives will clearly be inadequately represented.

In spite of this limitation, certain interesting trends may be observed. The figures recorded on Chart 2 make it abundantly clear that it was common practice to name girls after their grandmothers, though due to the limitations of the evidence noted above, the number of those named after maternal grandmothers is probably a gross under-estimate. When, therefore a man's wife and grandmother both bear the same name, particularly if

it is one of the more uncommon ones, there is a distinct possibility that the two women may have been granddaughter and grandmother, and the younger woman would thus have married her cousin.

Further, as the evidence presented above demonstrates, names tended to be re-used in families by both sexes and over several generations. The occurrence, therefore, of an unusual name in the families of a man and his wife, while it is not conclusive proof of affiliation, does at least suggest a possibility of a blood tie, which is not otherwise revealed by the recorded kin-terms on the stela. This clearly has an important bearing on the occurrence of consanguineous marriages in the Middle Kingdom. On the basis of his analysis of 358 stelae, Černý estimated that about 2% of Middle Kingdom marriages were between brothers and sisters \*(10), but he admitted that this figure might be too low, in view of the all too frequent omission of the names of both parents of each contracting party in any marriage. The percentage of consanguineous marriages of all degrees during the Middle Kingdom must have been rather larger than 2%, and the evidence amassed here for the re-use of names within the family strongly suggests that marriages between cousins in particular, may have been a regular occurrence.

From the hundred or so stelae which record the names of female servants, it is evident that about a third bore the same names as members of their masters' families (see Chart 2), and there are definite instances where a servant can be shown to have been named specifically for her employer, because his name has been incorporated into hers \*(11), but there is no way of knowing whether that was because the woman had been born into his service, or whether she had had her name changed on entering his household \*(12).

EXCURSUS C - OFFERING FORMULAE ON STELAE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM.

Stelae belonging to women are often smaller in size than the average, and, in general, have fewer figures portrayed on them. The reason for this is presumably that most women would appear on the stelae of several of their male relations, so they did not feel the need to erect independent monuments, or, if they did, felt obliged to record no more than the names of their mother and children, secure in the knowledge that other details concerning their families, and their own position within them, would be adequately represented elsewhere.

The following entries record the transliterations and translations of the offering formulae of all the stelae belonging to women, which were used in this study. For the convenience of the reader, any notes on the actual reading of these texts have been lettered and placed at the end of each translation, rather than with the general notes at the end of this work.

It will be observed that many of the inscriptions are very short and simple, but they are all perfectly standard formulae, addressing prayers to all the usual gods of the necropolis. As on stelae belonging to men, Osiris emerges as the most popular of the gods of the dead, but Anubis is well represented, and the stelae from Sakkara naturally favour Ptah and Ptah-okar. Some women, understandably preferred to address their pleas to the goddess Hathor, but the only unusual deity invoked on a woman's stela is the musician goddess, Meret, and this is entirely appropriate, as the owner of the stela was a singer (see below, Cairo stela 20 57).

Since women did not hold the great offices of state, long descriptions of public advancement are not found on their stelae, and the extended formulae asking for offerings on special festival days, only infrequently appear. However, when such long inscriptions do occur, they list, in standard

phrases, the requirements of the deceased, and the pious deeds she had performed \*(13). When episodes in the devotional life of a woman are referred to, the contents confirm that she could expect to participate in the religious life of the community, and could anticipate the same rewards and penalties as men in the Next World.

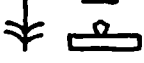

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Cair stelae 20016/17.

These two stelae both belong to a woman called Snt-it.s. 20016:

mryt nsw \*(a) Wsîr hnty imntyw pw w'b nb hm ntr nb rmt nbt sw3t(y).sn hr 'b3  
pn n dt m hd m hsfî ndm-îb.tn m nsw.tn m Wsîr nb Ddw dd.tn h3 m t hnkt k3w  
3pdw sntr mrht ht nbt ntr 'nh(t) im n k3 n im3hyt hr Hthr nbt t3wy 'nht mrt  
hr ntr '3 nb pt .....

It is the one beloved of the King and Osiris, the First of the Westerners, (who says) \*(b), "Oh, all w'b-priests, all prophets, and all people, who shall pass by this eternal offering table, going downstream or going upstream, you will rejoice in your king and in Osiris, Lord of Busiris, if you say: A thousand of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, incense and unguent, and every thing of which a god lives, to the k3 of the one revered before Hathor, the Lady of the Two Lands, he who lives and is loved before the Great God, the Lord of Heaven, .....

a) The first word is actually written , but stela 20017 shows that the group should be .

b) In order to make sense in English, it is necessary to supply the words "who say", or something similar.

0017: mryt nsw pw W ir hnty imntyw nb Ddw 's nb 'dt(y).f (y) rmt nbt sdt  
(y).sn w'b nb m33t(y).f(y) dd.tn hs Wsir s3h Inpw tpy dw.f nb t3 dsr Snt.it.  
s m3't-hrw h3 (m) t hnkt k3w 3pdw ht nbt nfr 'nh(t) im n k3 n ....

It is the one beloved of the King and Osiris, the First of the Westerners, Lord of Busiris (who says), "Every scribe who shall read, all people who shall hear, and every w'b-priest who shall see, say: May Osiris praise and may Anubis, who is upon his mountain, the Lord of the Sacred Land, glorify Snt-it.s, the justified. A thous nd of bread and beer, o n and fowl, and every good thing on which a god lives to the k3 of .....

Cair stela 20058.

htp di nsw Wsir hnty imntyw nb 3bdw di.f prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw n k3 n ...

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, the First of the Westerners, the Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, to the k3 of .....

Cairo stela 0219.

htp di nsw Wsir nb 3bdw Hthr nbt pr k3 n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives ( ) Osiris, Lord f Abydos, and (to) Hathor, Lady of the Lofty House, f r the k3 of .....

Cairo stela 20 57.

htp di nsw Mrt di.s prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pd ss mnt ht nbt nfrt w'b(t) n  
k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (t ) Meret that she may give invocation offering of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing, and all good and pure things to the k3 of .....

Cair stela O 75.

hṭp dī nsw W īr hnty imntyw dī.f prt-hrw t hnkṭ k3w 3pdw mnḥt snṭr mḥt  
n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, the First of the easterners, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, clothing, incense and unguent to the k3 of . . . . .

Cairo stelae 20316.

hṭp dī nsw Wsīr nb Ddw dī.f prt-hrw t hnkṭ k3w 3pdw šs mnḥt ḥt nbt nfrt w'bt  
'nḥt nṭr im n .....

A boon which the king gives (t) Osiris, Lord of Busiris, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing and all good and pure things on which a god lives to .....

Cairo stela 20357.

hṭp dī nsw Wsīr nb imnt nfrt prt-hrw t hnkṭ k3w 3pdw šs mnḥt n ....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of the Beautiful West, an invocation offering of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing f r .....

Cairo stela O36 .

im3hyt hr W īr nb imnt nfrt dī.f prt-hrw h3 (m) t hnkṭ k3w 3pdw šs mnḥt ḥt  
nbt nfrt w'b(t) .....

The one revered before Osiris, Lord of the Beautiful West, may he give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing and every good and pure thing .....

Cairo stela 0367.

The text of the prayer is virtually illegible, though the words prt-hrw are still visible.

Cairo stela 20445.

hṭp dī nsw Wsīr nb ȝbdw dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt kȝw ȝpdw šs mnḥt sntr mrḥt ḥt  
nbt nfrt w'bt 'nḥt ntr im dt hr ntrw n kȝ n ....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Abydos, that he may give eternally before the gods, invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing, incense and unguent, and every god and pure thing on which a god lives to the kȝ of .....

Cairo stela 045 .

hṭp dī nsw Wsīr ntr 'ȝ nb pt dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt ḥt nbt n kȝ ...

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, the Great God, the Lord of Heaven, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer and every thing to the kȝ ....

hṭp dī nsw Rth-Skr dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt kȝw ȝpdw n kȝ n ....

A boon which the king gives (t) Ptah-Sokar that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, to the kȝ of ....

hṭp dī nsw Pth dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt kȝ ȝpdw ḥt nbt n kȝ n .....

A boon which the king gives (t) Ptah that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, and every thing to the kȝ of .....

Cairo stela 20461.

hṭp dī nsw Wsīr nb Ddw prt-hrw t hnkt kȝw ȝpdw rn. nfr m is n hr(t)-ntr

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Busiris, invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, (for) her good name in the tomb of the Necropolis .....

Elsewhere on the stela, the owner, Nfrt, is said to be Honoured before the Great God, the Lord of Heaven, before Anubis and before Osiris ...nt nfrt, (on) the happy half-month festival.

Cairo stela 20564.

htp dī nsw Wsīr hnty imntyw ntr '3 nb 3bdw dī Inpw hnty sh ntr imy wt nb t3  
dsr h3 m t h3 m hnkt h3 m k3w 3pdw h3 m sntr sty ntr pr hr h3wt.f wrt nt  
Hr-'h3 n k3 n im3hy(t) hr ntr '3 nb 3bdw rh(t) nsw m3't T3ny i w'bw nb hmw .  
ntr nb 'k r hwt ntr nt Wsīr dd.tn m r.tn htp dī nsw prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw  
n.s r' nb m hb nb m wpt-rhpt tpy nb Dhwt nb w3g n k3 n im3hy(t) hr ntr '3  
nb 3bdw rh(t) nsw m3't T3ny dd.s ink nbt bīt hnty t rhyt im3hy(t) hs(t).n nb.  
nfrt pr n r šps(t) n nsw hr m3't.s fk3.n.f wī m wdhw n r'nb 'k.n.i m hsw  
pr.n.i (m) msw dīt.n r.s ikrw.s dd ht ir.tw n.s im3hy(t) hr hmt wrt nsw hnm  
hdt rh(t) nsw m3't T3ny nb im3h m3'(t)-hrw hr ntr '3 nb imnt rh(t) nsw T3ny  
sm.s r 3bdw hrw pfy nn md.tw 'k.s(t) r sh m3n.s št3w 'k.s nsmt d3ī.n.s ikrw  
m wī3 ntr pr rh(t) nsw T3ny m r' msw nw 'nh-īmy \*(a) r irty.s fnd.s 'nhw.s  
snw \*(b) r h'w.s hbs.n.tw.s in T3(y)t rdīt n.s hbsw.s n Hr-wr hrw pf itī.n.  
f Wrrt fnd(t).i \*(c) (hr) (s)nt irty (.i) hr gmh rh(t) nsw m3't nbt im3hyt.

A boon which the king gives (t) Osiris, First of the Westerners, the Great God, The Lord of Abydos, and which Anubis, who is pre-eminent in the divine booth, he who is in the place of embalming, the Lord of the Sacred Land, gives - 1000 of bread, 1000 of beer, 1000 of oxen and fowl, 1000 of incense, the divine odour, coming forth upon the great offering table of Hr-'h3, to the k3 of the one honoured before the Great God, the Lord of Abydos, the King's True Acquaintance, T3ny. Oh, all you w'b-priests, all you prophets



who shall enter into the temple of Osiris, may you say with your mouths:  
 A boon which the king gives, invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen  
 and fowl to her every day, and on every feast, on every New Year's Day  
 festival, every feast of Thoth, and w3g-festival, to the k3 of the one  
 honoured before the Great God, the Lord of Abydos, the King's True  
 Acquaintance T3ny. She says, "I am the owner of a (pre-eminent) character,  
 one who is outstanding among the people, a revered one, whom my lord has  
 praised, good in speech, valuable to the king because of her righteousness.  
 He rewarded me with offering tables every day. I entered in praise, I came  
 out in love. One whose speech caused her trustworthiness, one who when she  
 says a thing it is done for her, one revered before the King's Great Wife  
 and the Consort of the White Crown, the King's True Acquaintance, T3ny, full  
 of honour, justified before the Great God, the Lord of the West". The King's  
 Acquaintance T3ny, she shall go to Abydos on that day which is not spoken of.  
 She shall enter into the booth, so that she may see the mysteries. She shall  
 enter the sacred bark, after she has crossed the river in the divine barge.  
 The King's Acquaintance T3ny shall come forth by day. The mw nw 'nh-3ny  
 plant shall be for her eyes, her nose and her ears, and the snnw plant shall  
 be for her limbs. She has been clothed by Tayet, who gives her clothing of  
 Haroeris, on that day when he seized the Great Crown. May my nose smell and  
 my eyes see, the King's True Acquaintance T3ny.

a) Wörterbuch, vol.I, p.203. In view of the organs for which this plant  
 apparently held magic properties, it is interesting to remember how many  
 scenes in tombs and on stelae show the deceased in the act of smelling a  
 lotus flower.

(b) Wörterbuch, vol.IV, p.157.

(c) I have not been able to see the actual tela, but it is clear that

either the text or the copy must be defective in the last sentence. The reading suggested here is therefore purely conjectural.

Cairo stela 0656.

hṭp dī nsw Wsīr ḥnty imntyw ntr '3 nb 3bdw dī.f prt-hrw t ḥnkt k3w 3pdw ḥt  
nbt nfrt w'bt n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (t) Osiris, First of the Westerners, the Great God, the Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, and every good and pure thing to the k3 of .....

Cairo stela 20674.

hṭp dī nsw Wsīr nb Ddw ntr '3 nb 3bdw dī.f prt-hrw t ḥnkt k3w 3pd s tr mrht  
n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Busiris, the Great God, the Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, and incense and unguent to the k3 of .....

Cairo stela 20706.

hṭp dī nsw Inpw nb t3 dsr dī.f prt-hrw t ḥnkt n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Anubis, Lord of the Sacred Land, that he may give invocation offering of bread and beer to the k3 of .....

Cairo stela 20745.

There is no hṭp dī ns formula. The owner is simply said to be

im3hyt hr īr nb t3 'nh, honoured before Osiris, the Lord of the Land of Life

Cair stela 20754.

This stela belongs to a woman, but it has no htp dī ns prayer.

Cairo stela 20770.

htp (dī ns) ḥnpw tpy dw.f imy wt nb t3 dsr prt-hrw t hnkt n .....

A boon (which the king gives t ) Anubis, he wh is upon his mountain, who is in the place of embalming, Lord of the Sacred Land, invocation offerings of bread and beer for .....

Cairo stela 20777.

htp dī nsw Hthr nbt Štyt Wsir dī.sn prt hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw htpw df3w ht  
nbt nfrt w'bt 'nht ntr im n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Hathor, Lady of Štyt, and (to) Osiris, that they may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, offerings and provisions, and every good and pure thing on which a god lives, to the k3 of .....

British Museum stela, vol.II, pl.16.

The two htp dī ns prayers on this stela are made out in the names of the two husbands of Hwī.

British Museum stela, vol.II, pl.34.

htp dī ns Wsir hnty imntyw Wp-w3wt nb 3bdw prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw n.s  
m 3bdw m st nbt 'h'ntr im.s im3hyt Nfrt-tw \*(a) dd.s i 'nhw tpyw t3 hmw  
ntr nw ntr '3 m mrr.tn wnn im3h.tn hr ntr '3 prt-hrw st.tn mw m t hnkt  
wnty.fy m '.tn ir nfr n wnn m '.tn dd.tn m r.tn h3 m t hnkt k3w  
3pdw ht nbt nfrt w'bt w ... ..

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, First of the Westerners, and (to) Wepwawet, Lord of Abydos, invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl to her in Abydos, and in every place in which the god appears. The revered one Nfrt-tw, she says, "Oh, you who live upon the earth, and you prophets of the Great God, as you wish that there should be honour for you before the Great God and invocation offerings, you shall pour water, with bread and beer which shall be in your hand. If there chan e/<sup>to</sup>be nothing in your hand, you shall say with your mouth, 1000 of bread, beer, oxen and fowl and every good and pure thing for .....

(a) Ranke, Die Ägyptischen Personennamen, vol.I, p.203, no.9.

British Museum, vol.II, pl.38.

htp dī nsw Wsīr prt-hrw t hnkt n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, invocation and offerings of bread and beer for .....

British Museum stela, vol.III, pl.18.

htp dī nsw Wsīr nb 3bdw dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw ht nbt nfrt w'bt 'nht ntr im n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, and every good and pure thing on which a god lives to the k3 of .....

British Museum stela, vol.III, pl.50.

This stela belongs to two women and unfortunately the inscriptions are virtually illegible, but enough remains to show that there were two standard htp dī nsw f rwlae, one naming Osiris, and the other naming Anubis.

British Museum stela, vol.IV, pl.32.

htp i nsw Wsir hnty imtyw hp.s hr w3wt nfrt nt imnt hppt im3hywt \*(a)

hr.sn m htp m htp hr Wsir prt-hrw t hnk't n.s m hb nb r' nb ....

A boon which the king gives(to) Osiris, First of the Westerners - may she walk upon the beautiful paths of the West, upon which the Blessed Ones travel in peace, before Osiris. (May there be) invocation offerings of bread and beer f r her on every festival and every day .....

(a) Probably because this is a woman's stela, the Blessed Ones are all female.

Florence stela 7591, photograph 27.

Apart from the name, none of the inscriptions are legible.

Florence stela 7600, photograph 42.

htp dī nsw Inpw tpy dw.f imy wt nb t3 dsr dī.f kbhw hnk't irtt sntr mht

ht nbt nfrt w'bt t3w n 'nh prt-hrw t hnk't k3w 3pdw šs mht 3h m pt wsr

m t3 prt m hrw n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Anubis, who is upon his mountain, he who is in the place of embalming, the Lord of the Sacred Land, that he may give a libation of beer and milk, incense and unguent, and every good and pure thing, which is the breath of life. Invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing, and may she be glorious in heaven, may she be powerful on earth, and may she come forth into the day, to the k3 of .....

Berlin, vol.I, p.178, no.7280.

htp dī nsw Wsīr nb Ddw ntr '3 nb 3bdw m swt.f nb(t) nfrt prt-hrw t hnkt  
k3w 3pdw šs mnht n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Busiris, the Great God, Lord of Abydos and all his beautiful places, invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing to the k3 of ..

Vienna, p.17, I.8, no.27.

htp dī nsw Wsīr nb 3bdw dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw šs mnht sntr mnht ht  
nbt nfrt w'bt 'nht ntr im n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and unguent, and every good and pure thing on which a god lives t ....

Süddeutschen Sammlungen, vol.II, pl.IV, no.5.

The simple inscriptions only speak of the women as being honoured before the gods Ptah- okar, Osiris, the Great God, and Anubis.

Verschiedenen Sammlungen, pl.III, no.5.

htp dī nsw Wsīr nb 3bdw n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Abydos, for the k3 of ...

Leiden stela no.20, pl.XIX.

im3hyt hr W īr nb 3bdw dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw n k3 n ....

The one honoured before Osiris, Lord of Abydos, may he give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl to the k3 of ....

Leiden stel no.35, pl.XXV.

htp dī nsw Wp-w3wt nb 3bdw dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw n ....

A boon which the king gives (t) W pwawet, Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl to ....

Scepter of Egypt, vol.I, fig. 2.

htp dī nsw Wsīr nb Ddw ntr '3 nb 3bdw dī.f prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw šs mnht

ht nbt nfrt w'bt ddt pt km3t t3 innt H'py ntr 'nht im n k3 n ...

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Busiris, the Great God, the Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing, and every good and pure thing, which Heaven gives, the earth creates, and the Nile brings forth, on which a god lives to the k3 of .....

Field Museum 31285.

htp dī nsw Inpw tpy dw.f imy wt nb t3 dsr krst nfrt nt .....

A b on which the king gives (to) Anubis, who is upon his mountain, he who is in the place of embalming, the Lord of the Sacred Land, (that there may be) a good burial for ....

Elsewhere on the stela there is another prayer:

htp dī nsw Wsīr nb Ddw ntr '3 nb 3bdw prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw šs mnht n

A b on which the king gives (t) Osiris, Lord of Busiris, the Great God, the Lord of Abydos, invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing for ....

Further down on the stela, invocation offerings are again requested, this

time specifically in Dhwtt in wpt-rnpt in w3g, on the feast of Th th, on New Year's Day, and at the w3g-fe tival.

Field Museum 316 5.

htp dī nsw Sbk nb Nbyt dī.f prt-hrw t hñkt k3w 3pdw ht nbt nfrt n ....

A boon which the king gives (t) Sobek, Lord of Kom Ombo, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, and every good thing to .....

Athens, pl.V, no.16.

htp dī nsw Wsir nb Ddw ntr '3 nb pt ....

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Busiris, the Great God, the Lord of Heaven, .....

de Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour, Mars-Juin, p.39, fig.80.

htp (dī) nsw Inpw tpy dw.f imy wt nb dsr hnty sh ntr mw hñkt sntr k3w 3pdw ht nbt nfrt w' t n k3 n ....

A boon which the king gives (to) Anubis, who is upon his mountain, who is in the place of embalming and preminence in the divine shrine (that he may give) water, beer, and incense, oxen and fowl, and every good and pure thing to the k3 of .....

Brooklyn Museum, p.41 and pl.XXXIII.

htp dī Wsir ntr '3 b 3bd dī.f prt-hrw t hñkt k3w 3pdw n k3 n .....

A boon which the king gives (t) Osiris, the Great God, the Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl to the k3 of .....



Carlsberg A683, AE.I.N.9 6, pl.XCVII.

h t p d i n s w P h - S k r W s i r d i . s n p r t - h r w t h n k t k 3 w 3 p d w s n t r m r h t h t n b t n f r t  
' b t ' n h t t r i m s h m m m w s . t ( w ) \* ( a ) t 3 w n d m n m h y t m i ' n h w n k 3 n . . . . .

A boon which the king gives (t) Ptah-Sokar and (to) Osiris that they may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, incense and unguent, and every god and pure thing on which a god lives, (and that they may give) power over water and to smell the sweet breath of the North wind like the living to the k3 of .....

(a) Barta, Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel, p.83,  
 Bitte 79.

Carlsberg A687, AE.I.N. 1664, pl.XCVII.

h t p d i n s w W s i r n b t 3 d r h t p d i H t h r n b t T p - i h w p r t - h r w t h n k t k 3 w 3 p d w s s  
m r h t k b h w s n t r m r h t h t p w d f 3 w h t n b t b n r t h t n b t n f r t r n p w t b t h t n b t w ' b t  
h n k t n b t n k 3 n . . . . .

A boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of the Sacred Land, and a boon which Hathor, Lady of Aphroditopolis gives, invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster, oil thing and cold water, incense and unguent, offerings and provisions, every sweet thing, every god thing, every vegetable offering, every pure thing, and all offerings to the k3 of..

Abydos, v l.III, pl.XIII.

Each of the twenty-six figures on this stela has its own simple h t p d i n s w prayer. That of the King's Mother herself reads:

h t p d i s w W s i r n b 3 p d w d i . f p r t - h r w t h n k t k 3 3 p d w m r h t k 3 n . . . .

A b which the king gives (to) Osiris, Lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, and unguent to the k3 of .....

EXCURSUS D - THE LOCATION OF WIVES ON STELAE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

On stelae, it was customary for the figures representing female servants to be shown either at the bottom of the stela, or behind the seated figures of their employers, though very occasionally they might be shown facing their employers and presenting them with offerings. The figures of servants were often shown on a smaller scale than members of the family and they were usually portrayed standing, either with their hands at their sides, or carrying the possessions of their employers, or bringing food offerings. Only rarely was a servant, other than a nurse, portrayed kneeling \*(14), and none were shown seated on stools or chairs.

The female members of the owner's family, however, might be shown standing, seated, or kneeling, and they might carry a limited number of personal possessions (see above p.291).

It was customary for the figures representing the mother and children of the owner to be placed either with him in the first register, or in the one directly below him. A mother may occasionally stand behind the owner of the stela, displacing his wife, but it is more usual to find her facing him. Whereas it will be seen that there was a definite attempt to show the owner and his wife together, the mother of the owner is often the only parent he names, and so she stands alone. Even when the father is named, it was not apparently so vital to place his wife next to him, though it was fairly common practice to do so. The parents and the children of the owner are normally shown nearer to him on the stela than his siblings, and, in general, it may be assumed that the further down the stela a figure appears, the more remote is his or her connection with the owner.

The figure representing the wife of the owner of a stela appeared in one or other of the accepted poses, and she was usually portrayed in one of three places on the stela. The most popular location was at the side of, or just behind her husband (see fig.17), and she was often depicted with one arm round his waist or his shoulder. Another favoured location was facing her husband (see fig.18), usually across an offering table. Occasionally she appeared in a separate register,

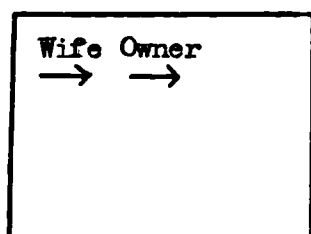


Fig.17

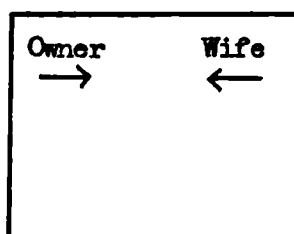


Fig.18

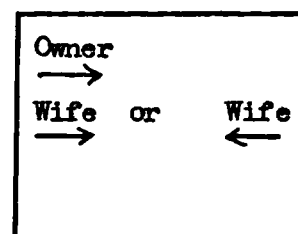


Fig.19

but even then, her figure would be very close to that of her husband, (see fig.19).

Clearly the principal governing the arrangement of the figures, was that husband and wife should be shown in the closest possible physical proximity to each other. When, therefore, a man had two or more wives, he either had to erect separate stelae, showing himself with one wife at a time \*(15), or he was faced with the problem of how to record the names of two or more women on one stela, without appearing to give one undue preference over the other.

An analysis of the available examples of such stelae shows that the methods of recording the existence of two or more wives were as follows:

1) To use inscriptions only. On those stelae which bear inscriptions but no accompanying figures, the names of a man's two wives could be placed one after the other \*(16), or one wife might be named, together with her children; then the other was named with her offspring if any \*(17). In either

case, it was customary to use the same designation, hmt.f or hmt.f nbt pr, for each. There are no examples of stelae where it can be convincingly demonstrated that one wife was said to be hmt.f, while the other was nbt pr. The only place where this mixing of terms is found is in the tomb of Wh-htp the sixth of Meir, whose whole tomb and marital circumstances are, in any case, probably atypical (see above ps. 262 and 394). There are several instances of men claiming to have children by women, other than their acknowledged wives, but the status of these women is never clarified (see above p. 300).

- 2) To show one figure with two inscriptions. In this way, the owner could economise on space on a small stela, and yet name both wives \*(18). An occasional variation of this method was to name one wife in the dedicatory inscription, and show the other wife on the main body of the stela \*(19).
- 3) To show both wives together in the same pose. The women would be shown standing, sitting, or kneeling, either behind their husband \*(20), beside him \*(21), facing him \*(22), or in the register below him \*(23). Yet another variation of this arrangement was to show the two wives kneeling, one at the feet, and the other under the chair of the husband \*(24).
- 4) To show one wife seated with the husband, while the other faces them, usually across an offering table. The wife by herself may be seated \*(25) or standing \*(26).
- 5) To show one wife seated with the husband, while the other stands behind their chair \*(27).
- 6) To show the owner twice, once with each wife \*(28).
- 7) To show the two wives in separate registers, but one directly under the other \*(29).

The essential feature of all these alternative locations is that the figures of both women, or their names, were displayed with equal prominence and were placed in the closest possible proximity to the figure or the name of the husband. The arrangement of figures and names on a stela can therefore help the reader to identify the wife, or wives, of the owner. If, for example, the owner of a stela is shown in the first register with hmt.f, and there is another woman, also said to be hmt.f, but whose figure is located in the third or fourth register, then it is more likely that the second woman is the wife of a member of the family of the owner, rather than of the owner himself. There may be no obvious link between this woman and a member of the owner's family, but this is of little importance, since it has been seen that the owner of a stela was interested in recording his own immediate family relationships, but was less scrupulous about those of others.

The avoidance of any suggestion of granting one wife precedence over the other, does, unfortunately limit the value of the information for it means, for example, that it is impossible to deduce which was the senior wife. Even when, as in cases four and five above, one wife appears to have been accorded some slight degree of preference, there is no way of knowing whether this was because she was the owner's first wife, the companion of his youth, <sup>or whether,</sup> as his second wife, she was present at the commissioning of the monument, and insisted that her predecessor be relegated to a less favourable position.

The epithets and phrases that sometimes accompany kinship terms on stelae are at best brief, and where such phrases as mrt.f and n st ib.f are introduced, they are always applied to both wives, once again avoiding a hint of favouritism. The same applies to the terms in3hyt and m3't hrw, which were awarded to both wives or neither \*(30).

On the basis of the arrangement of figures and on inscriptions, it is therefore not possible to produce conclusive evidence for the chronological order of a man's marriages, or to deduce whether or not he was practising polygamy.